JOY IN Tribulation.

OR, CONSOLATIONS FOR AFFLICTED SPIRITS.

By PHINEES FLETCHER, B.D. and Minister of Gods Word at *Hilgay* in *Norfolke*.

PSAL. 34. 19.

Many are the troubles of the righteous; but the Lord delivereth him out of all.

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Tribulation.

OF

CONSOLA-

TIONS FOR

AFFLICTED

BRITISH MUSEUM

9 8

TO
THE TRVLY
HONOVRABLE,
MY MOST HONO-
red Cousins, Sir WAL-
TER ROBERTS, Knight
and Baronet: and to his
gracious Lady, everlasting
Consolations of the
Eternall Com-
forter.



IR, your very ancient Gentry doth not so enoble you in the eyes of the

world, as your new man in the sight of the Church: εὐγένεια, πίστις, saith
Greg. Naz. that ancient & eloquent Father, *The new birth is the noblest birth*: In the Creation, Man was the first, and last creature; last in time, first in place and dignily, being made
Luk 3. 38. the *Sonne of God*, and the great Favourite of heaven. And now the New Creature, though last borne, as *Iacob*, yet as *Iacob*, obtaines the birthright, and over-tops the elder. The best Herald,

Gods blessed Spirit, preferres the *Beræans* as more Noble, or best borne, who *receiued the Word with all readinesse of minde, &c.* And surely if high bloud of Generous parents sets us aloft in the eye of the world, how much more lustre among Christians will that immortall seede give you, whereby you *are borne, not of bloud, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.*

Acts 17.11

Ioh.1.13

Now though I well know that the neare relation of fleſhly Alliance, and bloud which is betwixt us, (beſide many other knots of friendſhip) have tyed my heart, long ſince, unto you both, in all unfeyned affection, yet this ſpirituall kindred is a much dearer, and nearer linke, uniting my ſoule unto you in the bond of the Spirit; ſo that I can truly ſay with that bleſſed Apoſtle, *I am affectionately deſirous*

1 Theſ. 2. 8

of

of you, and willing to impart to you (not onely this ſlender fruit of) *the Goſpell* (but) *mine owne ſoule, becauſe you were deare unto mee.* I am confident you will receive this pledge of love with the ſame affection with which it is preſented, and therefore leaving theſe few Conſolations to the application of that great Comforter, and your ſelves with all your Olive branches, unto the Vnction of that holy one, and perfect growth

of

of the blessed Spirit, I commend the weake Author to your Christian love, and prayers, who while hee is, shall ever be

Your willing servant

in the Lord Iesus,

PHINEES FLETCHER.

TO

TO THE POORE in SPIRIT.

CHristian Reader: Whosoever thou art who mourneſt, and art humbled under the ſenſe of ſpirituall povertie, to thee belongs that bleſſednesse of the heavenly kingdome, and ſtrong conſolations of that great Comforter: *witnesse he that bought it for thee, and by his owne mouth hath bequeathed it to thee in his* Teſtament. Mat. 5. 3, 4.

ment. *But how cunning* Satan *is to hide this evidence from thy blubbered eyes, will neede no other testimonie then thine owne unquiet and dejected spirit. The*
1 Pet. 1. 8. *height of grace is* rejoycing in the Lord: *and this is* a joy unspeakeable and glorious, *and indeede a lesser heaven upon earth. Now that cursed enemie envies thee that thy future heaven, but is raging mad that thou should'st even here also enjoy an heaven of joy, in this vale of teares; therefore employes all his policies, and fallacies to hinder thy rejoycing, and to hold downe thy heart in distrustfull feares and sorrowes.*

Thou maist easily observe, that none have beene more cast downe in this uncomfortable mourning, then those, who (thou wilt confes) have had most cause of rejoicing.

That

That Princely Prophet had the oath of God (attesting by his holinesse) that he would not faile David. *And I know thou wilt acknowledge that he was (in the deepest mourning) a blessed Saint, and had great cause to rejoyce alwaies in the Lord; yet was there a time when his soule lay groaning under an intolerable burthen of heavie discomforts. He that* when hee walked in darkenesse, and had no light, *when not one sparke of earthly consolation shined forth unto him,* could yet stay himselfe on the Lord, *and could fill his heart (in this wane, nay, eclipse) with the borrowed light of his countenance, even this Saint found a time when his* soule refused comfort; *when even the remembrance of God) his maine*

Psal. 89. 35

Esa. 50. 10

See 1 Sam. 30. 6.

Psal. 77. 2.

maine cordiall) became his ſpeciall coraſive; ſo that his ſpirit was overwhelmed with it. Reade carefully that 77 Pſalme, and thou wilt confeſſe that thy troubles of ſpirit doe not equall, at leaſt cannot exceede his.

It is a conſtant practice of Satan, to hold, and rocke a carnall heart in all preſumptuous quietneſſe, and rejoycing; and, (if he may) to keepe downe the beleeving ſoule in continuall unchearefulneſſe and mourning. I have deſired therefore to publiſh this little Treatiſe, which God hath bleſſed to ſome in private, that if he be pleaſed to glorifie his power in great weakeneſſe, thy wounds may be ſuppled, if not cured; and to give occaſion to ſome Brother, who hath more gifts, and leſſe employment, to enlarge this excel-

excellent ſubject. Remember thou, that the joy of the Lord is thy ſtrength. *Oh let not thy ſorrow, (no not for ſinne) drowne thy rejoycing in that Saviour, who is become ſinne for thee, that thou* mighteſt bee the righteouſneſſe of God in him. *I know when thy ſoule is farre from peace, thou wilt be readie to ſay,* My ſtrength, and my hope is periſhed from the Lord; *but remember, the Lord* is thy portion: *Remember,* It is good that a man ſhould both hope, and quietly wait for the ſalvation of the Lord. *And let thy heart be aſſured (and in that aſſurance comforted) that* The Lord is good unto them that wait for him, to the ſoule that ſeeketh. Waite for thy Lord, for hee will come, and will not tarry.

Neh. 8. 10.

2 Cor. 5. 21

Lam. 3. 24, 25, 26.

He

To the Reader.

Rev. 22, 20

Hee that testifies these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen, Even so, Come Lord Jesus. *If you receive any profit, let mee have some use of it in thy prayers.*

Thy compassionate

Fellow-member,

P. F.

CHRI-

CHRISTIAN CONSOLATIONS FOR THE AFFLICTED *SPIRIT.*

CHAP. I.

The neceſſitie of comfort in this life.



AS in this eſtat of mortalitie our weak bodies ſtand in cõtinual need of reparation, as well by Phyſicall purgati-

ons, to diſſolve and caſt out ill humours, which through diſtemper either of ayre or dyet have crept in upon us, as continually by ſeaſonable refreſhings, and ſome exerciſe to gather & maintaine ſtrength and health; ſo, and much more our weaker Spirits, in this ſinfull world ſo ſubiect to backſliding, have much neceſſity of continuall comfort, as well to raiſe up our fainting ſoules, when they are ſtaggering through unbeliefe; as to under-prop and hold them faſt, when they ſtand by faith.

For Comfort in the large ſenſe being nothing elſe, but the fortifying the heart againſt the aſſault of evill, it cannot be denied, but that malicious enemy of man, eſpecially of Chriſtian

ſtian men, holds every one in a ſtraight ſiedge, and failes not to make battery by all manner of engines againſt ſoule and body with temporall and ſpirituall evils. The moſt have moſt need of comfort, but no ſenſe of their need: for they ſuppoſe they are ſtrong, and have need of nothing: They are luſty and ſtrong, they are not in trouble as other men, nor are plagued as other: they conceit themſelves all whole, as thoſe proud Phariſes, & ſee no uſe of a Phyſitian: but this ſtrength is meerly imaginary, and (as a dreame) only in their fancy, and therefore but a caſtle in the ayre. Even in earthly, much more in the ſpirituall eſtate, no man is ſo weake indeede, as hee who is ſtrong in

Rev. 3. 17.

Pſa. 73. 4. 5

his owne conceit: this very conceit being as a traiterous warder to open a doore of security, & betray all to the enemie. Others feele much want of comfort, but want not so much as they feele: for being strongly assaulted, and finding great weakenesse, they think all lost, or very desperate; and utterly forget that then they are strong indeed, when they are weake in their owne feeling: sense of weakenesse thrusting out importunate prayers to seeke for helpe, and importunity of prayer never failing to bring in strength and succour.

2 Cor. 12. 10.

But Comfort in the stricter sense, being nothing else but a lenitive plaister for a wounded Spirit, is by our heavenly Physitian

ſitian preſcribed onely to an heart ſicke of ſinne, and broken with godly ſorrow. To apply that Balme of *Gilead* to any other Patient, we (his Apothecaries) have no warrant; but to adminiſter it unto theſe wee have ſtrait charge and commandement.

Certainly, our moſt bleſſed Saviour purpoſely tooke upon him our infirmities, that being himſelfe touched with the feeing of our weakneſſe, *he might be a mercifull high Prieſt*: moſt unlike thoſe Phariſaical Prieſts by himſelfe condemned; They *bound heavie burthens, and grievous to be borne, and laid them on mens ſhoulders, but would not touch them themſelves with one of their fingers.* But his yoake is *light* (*his Commandements not*

Heb. 2. 17. 18. & 4. 15.

Mat. 23. 4.

Mat. 11. 30. 1 Ioh. 5. 3.

grievous) and yet he beareth it
first himself, and receiveth the
whole weight upon his owne
shoulders. As hee therefore
commãds his Disciples to take
up their crosse and follow him
and shuts out of his company
Mat, 10, 38 all such as refuse (as *being un-
worthy of him*;) so he takes it up
first himselfe, and either pro-
portions the crosse to their
strength, or measures strength
to them, according to the cross
which they beare. First, the
Gal 3. 13. curse he taketh altogether up-
on himselfe, and beareth it off
wholly from them. Secondly,
he sendeth in that Comforter
to them, who shall sustaine and
strongly carry them through,
and when by reason of sinfull
infirmity they are ready to
faint, shall put new spirit into
them. And

And to this end he doth not only command his Messengers to rebuke *sharpely, that men may be sound in the faith*, & the dead rotten flesh of our corrupt nature may be cut out; but chargeth them *to comfort*; for so signifies all that word (παρακαλεῖν) ordinarily translated *exhort*. And as *David* sent his servants to comfort *Hanun*, so the Sonne of *David*, our most gracious Savior, sends his Embassadours to every afflicted and dejected soule, and commandeth them *comfort you, comfort you my people, Speake comfortably to Ierusalem*.

Tit. 1. 13

2 Tim. 4. 2.

2 Sam. 10.

Esa. 40. 1.

As therefore wee are most willing to bring, so must thou who art a Christian be as ready to receive this message.

I am one (the least and low-

est, yet one) of these Messengers: and who are the *Israel of God*, and his true (suppose never so weak) servants, but those that *desire to fear his name*? who shall *be refreshed*, but *hee that is laden*? wherefore hath God given a *tongue of the learned*, but to *minister a seasonable word to him that is weary*? and if wee are weary, why doe we not accept, nay greedily take hold of the refreshing offered? whosoever thou art who groanest under the burthen of sinne, and sighest to feele the fetters of thy strong corruptions; whosoever breakest thy heart, disquietest, and vexest thy spirit in the sight and sense of thy rebellious flesh, crying out, *Who shall deliver me from this body of death*? When *wilt thou enlarge my*

Neh. 1. 10, 11.
Mat. 11. 29.
Esa. 50. 4.
Rom. 7. 24.
Psa. 119. 32.

my heart, that I may runne in the way of thy Cõmandements? know the Lord Iesus was purposely annointed for thee, even *to heale the broken hearted, to set at libertie them that are bruised:* know that all the comforts of the blessed Spirit are thy portion; and not onely the Minister, but every member of Christ upon occasion bound to reach it forth to thee, and charged to comfort the *feeble minded.* Now therefore as the Lord hath given mee an heart and hand desirous to distribute a word of comfort unto any fainting Christian, so the same *God of all mercy and compass on* give every weary soule an hand to take fast hold of it, and to hold it fast; to receive it readily, and stedfastly to retaine it.

Luk. 4. 18.

1 Thes. 5.

Verily to this end the *Father of our Lord Iesus Christ, the father of mercies, & God of all comfort doth comfort us in all our tribulation, that wee may be able to comfort them which are in any affliction, by the comfort wherewith we our selves are comforted of God. Let not therefore the Consolations of God seeme a small matter unto us.* Comfort then in every respect is very needeful: needfull for the Stewards of Christ, faithfully to deale this portion to the afflicted, and no lesse need have they to receive it: But where (saith the sicke soule) oh where shold I finde it.

2Cor.1.3, 4.

Iob 15.11

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

Where comfort is to be found: even in all things; and first in affliction it ſelfe.

SUrely it is not the leaſt of our miſeries, which ſinne brought in upon us, that with the loſſe of all ſpirituall comfort, wee loſt alſo all knowledge where to ſeeke & finde it. How eaſily can we by our taſte diſcerne the beſt meates and drinkes, how eaſily can we learne where, and how to procure them? but in what conſiſteth our true comfort, the ſtrength and ſolace of our poore, naked, miſerable Spirits, and where to ſearch for it we are wholly ignorant, blind as ſtones, nay worſe, wilfully blinde.

blinde. What foole will let downe a nett for fish in the mountaines, or set a toyle for Deere in the Seas? *Doe men*
Mat. 7. 16. *looke for grapes of thornes, or figs of thistles?* yet this madnesse is common to natural men, who thinke to finde strength in vanity, and comfort in vexation: when seekes a rich man for shelter against the evill day?
Pro. 18. 11. *His wealth is his strong City, & an high wall in his conceit.* Where doe worldlings search for, and
Psal. 4. 7. hope to finde joy, and solace? in their Wheate, and Wine. The Epicure comforts and cheers up his soule, *Eat, drink,*
Lu. 12. 19. *and be merry, thou hast goods laid up for many yeeres.* Nay, the drunken Hog thinks to drinke downe sorrow in his swil-
1 Cor. 15. 32. tub; *Let us eat and drinke, for to*

morrow

morrow we ſhall dye. Come, and I will bring wine, and wee will fill our ſelues with ſtrong drinke, and to morrow ſhall be as this day, and much more abundant: as if a man ſhould ſeeke for Paradiſe under the frozen Poles, for heaven in hell. Eſa. 56. 12

Now as nothing is more vaine then to ſearch for comfort againſt the ſorrowes of this world in this world of ſorrowes, ſo as fond were it for a Chriſtian to rake out any comfort from the puddles of heathen and naturall men. Their beſt Phyſitians and medicines can never poſſibly worke upon the part affected, *that is*, the Conſcience. The choice of them are but as *Iobs* friends, *miſerable comforters*. Their barrennes in this fruit will yeeld us

us an excellent document how beggar-poore our nature is in any grace; when we obserue what weake comforts those strong wits with all their studie, and helpe of nature produced in the necessities of themselues, and their friends. Looke what difference wee finde in swoons and qualmes, betweene hot water and small beere, such, & infinitely more shall wee obserue betweene the consolatiõs given by God in the Scriptures, and naturall men in their writings. See it in some instances.

As first against affliction in generall: All calamities (say they) are either casuall, and a wise man will despise chanceable events; or else fatall, such as by destiny are set out for us.

us, and therefore cannot be avoided, but muſt be borne. Now conſider what vertue there is in ſuch a plaiſter to heale the leaſt ſcratch of any trouble.

Compare with this the comforts of the bleſſed Spirit. *i. God offers himſelfe to thee in affliction as a Father: armeth thee with proportionable ſtrength to paſſe through it: clenſeth thy defiled heart by this purging fire, and purifies it from the droſſe of ſinne; prevents eternall condemnation, and embrightens thy heavenly crowne by it.* And what wound ſo deepe, which theſe ingredients will not perfectly cure, and skin ſoundly?

Heb. 12.7. 1 Cor. 10. 13. Pro. 20. 30. 1 Cor. 11. 32. 2 Cor. 4.17.

Come to particulars: In baniſhment, the Phyloſopher will tell thee, Every ſoyle is a valiant

valiant mans Country. In disgrace and infamy, It is but popular breath, lighter thē ayre. In death; Cities (say they) States, the whole world of men are mortall. Now alas what strength is there in these weake reeds to beare up a soule plunged, and even swallowed up in feare and horror? Certainly, if a man were sinking before, these comfortours would be so farre from raising his dejected heart, that they would rather utterly overwhelme, and drowne it in all hopelesse perplexity.

But our great comfort maks us to see, that *here we are strangers and Pilgrims*: neither can we be exiled from God, and from our heavenly *Ierusalem*, and *Blessed are you when men re-*

Heb.11.13
Phil.3.20

Mat.5.11.
12.

vile

vile and perſecute you, and ſay all manner of evill of you. Reioyce, and leape for ioy, for great is your reward in heaven. Hee maketh us to know that death is but a *ſleepe in the Lord, a reſt from all labour, which cannot ſeparate from the love of God, but uniteth us unto Christ.* By theſe and ſuch like, the ſoules of the faithfull have beene revived, and quickned in the midſt of death, and ſupported in ſpite of all oppoſition of Satan, and his inſtruments. Heathens then are Phyſitions of no value, and all their Simples gathered from their naturall reaſon, like to thoſe of our Empiricks, which perhaps will not hurt, but certainly will nothing helpe us.

1 Thc. 4. 14. Rev. 14. 13. Rom. 8. 38. 39. Phil. 1. 23.

Therefore paſſing by theſe *dry pits, which will hold no water,* let

let us come to the spring-head, even our glorious head, the Lord Iesus (who is both the Physitian, and medicine of the broken heart) and to his holy Ordinances, the channels (full channels) of all heavenly consolation.

For I purpose not here to summe up all the Cordials, which may refresh and glad an humbled, dejected Spirit, (that must bee the worke of greater gifts and longer time) Verely as the Bee drawes honey from every herbe, even weeds and venemous plants; so the faithfull Christian may extract comfort from all things, even the most grievous and fearefull. If he looketh up to heaven, it was made for him: here to light him;

him, hereafter to harbor him: If downe to the earth, it is given to the Sonnes of men, especially the Sonnes of God, as a Nurse of their temporall life, and a bed in death. All the Creatures are his; nay, death and hell yeeld him this comfort, (not onely that he is delivered from them, but) that they shall revenge him of his enemies, and torment his tormentors. But I desire to bee short, & therefore wil confine my selfe to narrower limits.

Now as in any great house there are not onely Cisternes retaining, and by divers pipes conveighing water unto every Office, but specially a living well, or fountaine, feeding these Cisternes: So in the Church, (which is Gods house)

house) wee shall find certaine Ordinances of God, wherein he layes up, and whereby hee conveyes these sweet refreshings unto our soules: Afterward, they will lead us on unto the Well-head, that River of God, nay, Seas and Oceans of all consolation, even the God of all comfort. First, therefore, (to omit many) the Lord hath stored up for us, & bringeth home to us much comfort, as well in other holy meanes, as in affliction it selfe. But (as *Nathaniel* of *Nazareth*, so) some Christian, perhaps, will speake of affliction: *Can any good thing come out of evill?*

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

The description and distribution of Afflictions.

TRue it is, that Affliction is of it selfe the very Spring of bitternesse, worldly sorrow, and death: The naturall fruit of it is no other but murmuring, cursing, and desperate blaspheming; but is wholly changed through the grace of God, powerfully working in it. Looke as the waters of *Marah* were very bitter, yet when the Tree, pointed out by God, was cast into them, they became sweet: And as those Springs of *Iericho* flowed with death and barrennes, yet were healed by *Elisha* with salt: so when God seasoneth Afflictions

Exod. 15. 23. 25.

2 Kin. 2. 19 20, 21, 22.

Heb.2.10

ons with that Tree of Life, (who was *himselfe consecrate through Afflictions,*) and with that Salt of his Spirit, he maketh them wholesome and pleasant.

The Crosse, therefore, is as some wine, which though of it selfe it be tart & unpleasant, yet seasoned with a little Sugar, it will not only goe down with delight, but warme the stomacke, and make the heart merry.

Now Affliction is nothing else (as wee know) but some evill and grievance pressing us either in body or soule, drawn in by sinne, and sent in by our just God; in generall, (as an Herald of Armes) to summon all men to lay downe their rebellion, and come in by Repentance:

pentance: in particular, a Meſſenger of wrath, and beginning of hell to the reprobate and diſobedient, but an Embaſſadour for peace, and the narrow gate to heaven to the Elect and faithfull. Briefly to runne over this diſcription:

That Affliction is a grievous evill, ſhall need no other witneſſe but our ſenſe; yet further teſtified by that infallible Truth: *No chaſtiſement for the preſent ſeemeth to bee ioyous, but grievous.* That it is the attendant of ſinne, is evident: *Death entred by ſinne, and the wages of ſinne is death temporall and eternall. Wherefore is the living man ſorrowfull? Man ſuffereth for his ſinne. Your iniquities have hindered good things from you, and your ſinnes have turned away theſe*

Heb.12.11

Rom.5.12, & 6.23.

Lam.3.39.

Ier.5.25.

these things. In a word, reade *Deutr*.28. from the 15.*ver*. to the end, and, wee shall there finde, that the disobedience & breach of Gods law (which is sinne, 1 *Ioh*.3.4.) is that needle, which draweth after it the whole file, and long thred of misery and evill.

Againe, that God is the soveraigne disposer, who ordereth it according to his owne pleasure, is most evident: *Out of the mouth of God proceedeth not evill, and good?* yes answereth the same Prophet, & Spirit: *We have transgressed and rebelled, and thou hast not pardoned. Thou hast covered with anger; and persecuted us; thou hast slain, and hast not pittied; thou hast covered thy selfe with a cloud, that our prayer should not passe through;*

Lam.3.38, 42,43,44, 45.

thou

thou haſt made us the of-ſcouring and refuſe in the midſt of the people. Shall there be any evill in a Citie, and the Lord hath not done it. I make peace, and create evill? Amos 3.6. Eſa. 45.7.

Moreover, that the generall end, and office of affliction is as a trumpet, to ſummon and call us into the Courts of God, to lay downe our rebellion, and acknowledge our fealty, is every where manifeſt in Scripture: *I prepare a plague, and purpoſe a thing againſt you, returne therefore every one. I have given you cleanneſſe of teeth, yet have you not turned unto me. I have with-holden the raine, yet have you not returned unto me. Peſtilence have I ſent among you, yet have you not returned to mee. I have over-throwne you as Sodome and Gomorra, yet have you not re-* Ier. 18.11. Amos 4. 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11.

turned to me: where the Lord most plainly discovereth his end of sending in so many grievances among them, namely, that they might returne by repentance. *I have smitten your children in vaine, they have received no correction.* Affliction is no good end, when correction, or amendment followeth not. *Wherfore should you be smitten any more? you fall away more and more.* The speciall end why God smiteth ceaseth whē men reject repentance.

Ier. 2. 30.

Esay 1 5.

Furthermore, that Affliction is a messenger of wrath, and indeede the gate of hell to the Reprobate, will easily appeare by many plaine testimonies. *Fire is kindled in my wrath, and shall burne to the bottome of hell. I will send plagues among them,*

Deut 32. 22, 23.

them, I will bestow mine arrowes upon them. Such were those afflictions laid upon *Caine, Saul, Iudas, &c.* Especially this truth wil be cleared in those plagus spent on *Pharaoh* and *Egypt*; which were not appointed by God, or ever intended as means to reclaime him (else God would have rebuked Satan, and not suffered him to harden the heart of that heathen King by them to further obstinacy) but, 1. to make his resistance more unexcusable; 2. to be fore-runners to his destruction of body and soule. For, *to this end God appointed him, to shew his power in him:* even that power of the *Potter over the clay, to make one vessell to honour, another to dishonour:* that power, whereby hee *hath mercy on whom hee will*

have mercie, and whom he will he hardeneth. Compare *Exod.9.16.* with *Rom.9.17.18.21.*

But that Afflictions are Embassadours of peace to the faithfull, and indeede a narrow gate, (yet a gate) leading to their happinesse shall most clearely bee shewed by that which followeth, and in the meane time may be sufficiently manifested by the testimony of the Apostle, *Wee must through many afflictions enter into the kingdome of God.* Act.14.22.

Now all afflictions may be differenced eyther from the subject, in which they exist, or the end for which they are sent. The subject in which they exist is either soule or body (where I so farre extend the words, as to include in them

them al neceſſaries belonging to both.) Thus blindnes, hardneſſe, deadneſſe of heart, terrors, griefe, deſertions of the Spirit, ſinful infirmity, & many other may be reckoned among the evils and afflictions of ſoule: ſo ſickneſſe, payne, loſſe of friends, poverty, diſgrace, and infinite other hanging upon the body and bodily eſtate. Againe, they may be conſidered from their end, why they are ſent by God; namely, for correctiō to ſome, to others for confuſion; & thus they are chaſtiſemenus to his children, to rebels puniſhmēts It will therfore much further our proceeding, if wee briefly lay downe the difference betweenchaſtiſmēt & puniſhmēt

Firſt then it is more appa-

rent then can be denied, that in the matter of them there is none or little difference: For in outward evils, *All things come alike to all, the same condition to the just & unjust, to him that sweareth, and to him that feareth an oath.* Eccl. 9. 2. So likewise many spirituall evils are common to all; which is evidently cleared in the testimonies of many afflicted Saints; *The arrowes of the Almighty are within me, the poyson whereof drinketh up my spirit: the terrours of God doe set themselues in array against me.* Iob. 6. 4. *Thou writest bitter things against mee, and makest me possesse the iniquities of my youth.* Iob. 13. 26. Thus *David* complaineth that hee had lost the joy of Gods salvation: see also *Psal.* 38. 2. and 2 *Cor.* 7. 5. Psal. 51. 12. So then, both the faithfull and unfaith-

unfaithfull ſuffer many evils; and the ſame afflictions in the matter of them befall both.

Secondly, it muſt bee remembred, that by reaſon of this neereneſſe in their matter, they are ſometimes uſed one for another: and puniſhment called chaſtiſement, and chaſtiſement uſed for puniſhment, & though not often, yet ſometime even the Scripture uſeth theſe termes promiſcuouſly, affirming the godly to be puniſhed, and the heathen chaſtened. But in propriety of ſpeech there is very much, and palpable difference: For, Divine chaſtiſement is ſuch affliction which God of his fatherly wiſedome and love layes upon his children, for the triall and increaſe of his grace in them

here, and their glory in him hereafter, sustayning them in the meane time by his Spirit, and so bringing forth in them the fruit of holinesse and righteousnesse.

Contrary, Divine punishment is that affliction which God in wrath and hatred layeth upon the wicked, as an enemy to their confusion, and further damnation, with-holding the comfort, and saving worke of his holy Spirit, which therefore produceth in them murmuring, despayre, and blaspheming.

Chap. IIII.

The difference betweene punishnishment and chastisement.

OBserve from hence five manifest differeces wher-

by

by the chaſtiſements of God are diſtinguiſhed from his puniſhments. The firſt is from the fountayne, or cauſe, whence they iſſue. Chaſtiſement is from a fatherly love, and faithfulneſſe in his Covenant. *Whom the Lord loveth he chaſteneth, & ſcourgeth every ſon whom he receiveth.* Heb. 12. 6. *As many as I love, I rebuke & chaſten.* Rev. 3. 19. See alſo *Pr.* 3. 12. His promiſe in his Covenant is, *If they break my Statuts & keep not my Commandements: Then will I viſite their tranſgreſſion with the rod, & their iniquity with ſtrokes: My Covenant will I not break, &c. I haue ſworn by my holineſſe I will not faile David.* Pſal. 89. 31 32, 33, 34, 35. The Prophet knowing this, confeſſeth, *I know that of very faithfulnes thou haſt afflicted me.* Pſ. 115. 75.

Contrarily, the puniſhment

of the wicked is from the wrath of God, as an Enemy: *The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodlinesse and unrighteousnesse of men, which with-hold the truth in unrighteousnesse. Vpon them that disobey the truth, shall be indignation and wrath.* Thus when the Lord had set down the great provocations of that rebellious people, he infers; *Fire is kindled in my wrath, and shall burne to the bottome of hell. I will make thee to passe with thine enemies into a land which thou knowest not; for a fire is kindled in mine anger, which shall burne upon you.*

Rom. 1. 18

Deut. 32. 22

Ier. 15. 14.

The second difference is in the subject. Divine chastisement is proper to the children of God, but punishment belongeth to rebels. *God scourgeth every*

every ſon whom he receiveth, but baſtards are without correction: Heb. 12. v. 8
which is more evidently taught us in that word of the original there rendred (*chaſtiſe*) παιδεύω, which is derived from παῖς, a *ſonne*, or *childe*. Reaſon alſo will further confirme it; For correction being the cutting off the offence, that the offender may be reconciled, belongeth therefore to children: But puniſhment is the cutting off the offender, that others may take heede and beware; and therefore is due to rebels and traitors.

The third difference is the finall cauſe, or end unto which theſe afflictions are aymed. The end of chaſtiſement is amendment of life, whence it receiveth the name of corr-

ction;

ction; which signifieth to set right, or strait. *Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now I keepe thy word.* Psa.119.67 *As many as I loue I rebuke and chasten; be zealous therefore, and amend.* Rev.3.19. Another end is trial and exercise of our faith, loue, patience, and other graces. Hence afflictions called a *fiery triall to proue us.* 1 Pet.4.12 So another Apostle calls tentations, *The triall of our faith.* Iam.1.2,3. Consider also that saying of Saint *Peter*, 1 *Pet.*1.6.7. Looke as by some paynefull worke in putting forth the strength of the armes, legges, &c. for the overcomming of some difficulties, the body is exercised, the sinewes and other organicall parts much confirmed, the vital, and all the members not a little strengthened: so when

when our faith, love, patience, or any other member of the new man is employed in any ſpirituall actions, wherein ſome fleſhly Combatant is vehemently oppoſed, certaine is it, that howſoever (for the preſent) there may follow ſome ſenſe (at leaſt) of weakneſſe, yet even the grace ſo tried, and the whole inward man gathers much comfort, and activeneſſe from ſuch fiery trials. For it is the very exerciſe of the ſpirituall man; yeelding excellent *fruit to thoſe that are exerciſed by it.* For as trees ſhaken with the winde are better rooted: ſo grace after a ſtorme is more firmly ſetled. *Patience is wrought out, & perfited by tribulatiõ, & grows fruitful in experiẽce:* whẽ we grow high in our own conceit,

Heb. 12. 11

Rom. 5. 3, 4, 5: Iam. 1. 3, 4.

conceit, and begin to be exalted above measure; then this affliction (as a pruning knife) tops our pride, abaseth us in our owne eyes, and humbles us under the mighty hand of God: *Remembring the gall and wormewood, my soule is humbled within mee.* Thus when *Peter* arrogantly preferreh his faith and love above all his fellow Apostles, and all men; *If all men be offended because of thee, yet will I never bee offended:* strooken downe with that triall, and sifted, hee left his swelling conceit behinde him in the sieve, and laying aside his comparisons, answereth in a more modest streine, *Simon, lovest thou mee more then these? Lord* (saith hee) *thou knowest that I love thee* So also that

Lam.3.19. 20.

Mat.26.31 33.

Ioh.21.15

choice

choice vessell of God was kept downe by the buffeter of Satan: nay, even the assurance and increase of our glory is intended, and wrought by afflictions. But hath the Lord any such end in the punishment of the ungodly? No; but for *this cause have I appointed thee, that I might shew my power in thee.* 2 Cor. 12. 7 — See Rom. 8. 16. 17. 2 Cor. 4. 17 — Exod. 9. 16

The fourth difference is in the adjunct: The assistance of Gods holy Spirit (with strēgth comfortably to beare whatsoever is imposed) is ever adjoyned to chastisement: *God is faithfull, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that which you are able, but will give the issue with the temptation, that you may be able to beare. God comforteth us in all our tribulations.* This we 4. 1 Cor. 10. 13. 2 Cor. 1. 4

cvi-

evidently see exemplified in *Iob*, who being assailed with al maner of temptations, yet was even mightily supported by that powerful Spirit, by whom in the middest of that fiery furnace (which like that of *Nebuchadnezzar*, was heated seven times more than usual) he was strongly sustayned in faith: *Though he slay me, I will trust in him: He shall be my salvation: I know I shall be iustified: I am sure my Redeemer liveth.* Contrary, the punishments of the wicked are no way lightned by this blessed Comforter, and therefore they instantly sinke under them: as *Saul*, *Caine* and *Iudas*. Observe this truth in one instance: *Peter* is apprehended, imprisoned, bound with two chains, between two souldiers:

Iob 13.15. 16.18. & 19.25.

Acts 12.

All

All this breaketh not his reſt: he ſleeps, ſtrõg light could not awake him, till he was ſmote on the ſide by the Angell; hee knew the next day was his laſt, yet ſee how ſoundly he ſleeps: when he awakes he ſees a ſudden great light, but without any feare. This reſt came not from fleſh and bloud; but that bleſſed Spirit ſpeaking peace to his ſoule in Chriſt, gave him power to ſay, and doe with *David*: *I will both lay me downe in peace, and ſleepe, for thou Lord only makeſt me dwel in ſafety*. On the other ſide, *Saul* was at liberty, had a ſtrõg army, had oftẽ vãquiſhed thoſe enemies yet no ſooner hard of death (& that by the divel, the father of lies) *but fals along on the earth, was ſore afraid, and there was no ſtrength in him*, and though he

Pſal. 4. 8.

1 Sam. 28. 20, 21.

could not but be very hungry, as having eaten no bread all day and night, yet refuseth to eate. Whence came this feare? from naturall cowardise? nay certainly, *Saul* was a man used to dangers, and naturally of more courage than *Peter*, a poore Fisher-man; but the cause was, *The Spirit of the Lord* (even in his ordinary gifts, as valour, &c.) *was departed from Saul*: how then could any strength be in him?

1 Sam. 16. 14.

5

The last difference betweene chastisement and punishment, is in the fruits of them. There is no fruit comparable to that of divine chastisement: *He chastiseth us for our owne profit, that wee may be partakers of his holinesse. It bringeth forth the pleasant fruit of righteousnes to them that*

Heb. 12. 10 11.

that are thereby exercised. This momentarie light affliction causeth unto us a most excelling excellent (so is the original) *eternall weight of glory.* Now what can all the world boast of in the least degree comparable to this? I call every christian soule to witnesse, that all is dung and losse in comparison of these sweet fruits; even that (by carnall men) so much despised holinesse, is the image and beauty of God stamped upon a christian, the divine nature; infinitely therefore above all earthly excellencies, which perish with the using. 2 Cor. 4. 17

But what is the fruit of divine punishment, when the visitation of the judge comes upon them, either in that generall day of those great Assises,

ſes, or the more particular of his private Seſſions; ſome deſpaire, as *Caine*, *Saul*, *Iudas*; ſome murmure, as the rebellious Iſraelites; ſome blaſpheme the name of God, who hath power over theſe plagus: ſome call to the mountains & rocks to fal upon them, & cover them. Hēce ariſeth much comfort to every afflicted Chriſtian: even our affliction it ſelfe, if we well conſider it, wil afford us no little help againſt the grief & ſmart of it.

Rev. 16.9.

Hoſ. 10.8. Rev, 6.16.

CHAP. V.

What comforts a Chriſtian ſoule may gather from affliction it ſelfe.

FIrſt therefore is it a ſmall comfort that this evil cō-

meth

meth not only from God as a Father, but from the wisdom, love, faithfulnes of such a father? The Lord in his gracious love determineth to do us good, maketh an everlasting covenãt with us (not to please our flesh & blood, but) *to do us good, putteth his feare into our hearts, that we shall never depart from him, yea, to delight in us to doe us good:* and in his wisdom knowing that there is in us naturally a deceitfull heart, starting aside like a broken bow, *an evill and unfaithfull heart readie to depart from the living God*; such, as when it was at the best, soone turned out of the way which hee mãded; he appointed his chastisemẽts as thongs to bind us to his feare, and to settle us in his

Ier. 32.40, 41

Ier. 5.23. Heb. 3.12.

his covenant, in which consisteth our onely happinesse.

Can we thinke that God taketh any pleasure in the smart of his children? If we *(which after our owne pleasure)* have no delight in the griefe of our infants; oh then let our owne affections teach us, that hee who is love, who is infinit love, *doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men:* were not our necessity more then his pleasure, wee should never taste of chastisement. How then should we rejoyce (if not in the smart of the correction, yet) in the love of the Correctour? Shall a little Sugar sweeten, and make pleasant to our taste many things, which in themselves are sower and bitter; and shall not the love

Heb. 12. 10

Lam. 3. 33.

love of Christ, which *is better than wine*, which *is better than life it selfe*, sweeten a light, nay the most grievous affliction? Iustly may wee blame our taste, that there is much flesh, and little savour of the *Spirit* in it, *if Christ Iesus, who is wholly delectable*, and his love, which to us is the most delectable thing in him, cannot take away the bitternesse of some gentle, nay, the most sharpe correction.

Cant. 1. 1. Psal. 63. 3.

Cant. 5. 16

Secondly, how soveraigne a Cordiall is it to an afflicted Spirit, when hee remembers that all his troubles are eyther such as the world layeth upon him to draw *him from God to it selfe*, or God layeth upon him, to draw him to himselfe from the world? See-

Seeing both of them are the very portion of Gods children. For the former, persecutions of wicked men, slanders, reproches, and the scofs of the world are ranked among chiefe blessings, and are bequeathed by Christ as his legacie: See, *Mar.* 10. 30. and we in such a case commanded by our Saviour to rejoyce, and to dance for joy, as being a most happy & blessed estate: For the other, should wee not as much rejoyce in it? For in these afflictions *God is offered to us* (so is the word προφέρεται) *as unto Sonnes*. Is there any gift in the world, or is the world it selfe a gift comparable to God? Seeing then that God offereth himself to us in these chastising afflictions, how welcome

Mat. 5. 11, 12.

Heb. 12, 7.

welcome ſhould they be unto us, and how great pleaſure ſhould wee take in them, not for any thing indeed in them, but for that which they bring unto us: Is not their eſtate wofull, who being in the viſible Church, and making no other account but to ſhare the inheritance, ſhall at length be found baſtards, and thruſt out of doores (like ſcornfull *Iſmael*) to their eternall ſhame and confuſion? Now ſuch are all they who receive no chaſtiſement from the hand of God: who then would not comfort himſelfe in that correctiõ, which is indeed for the time, unpleaſant to the fleſh, but yet even then, to the ſpirit, an evidence of an happineſſe beyond all thought or Heb. 12. 8.

time? who would not with
Heb.11.25 *Moses*, rather chooſe to ſuffer affliction with the children of God, then to enioy the pleaſures of ſinne for a ſeaſon?

3 Another eſpecial comfort we may receive from the end or purpoſe of God; namely, that his grace which he hath given us may be tried, and ſo himſelfe glorified. Now this triall implyeth not onely the proofe, or manifeſtation of it, that others might take example by it, and God might have glory, but alſo a defæcation (as I may ſay) or purifying it, taking away the ruſt, ſoyle and
Isa.105.19 filth which it gathereth by our corruption. Thus in the firſt ſenſe the Lord tried *Ioſeph* by his affliction. Thus *Abra-*

brahams faith; thus the faith of thoſe three royall young men was proved or tryed. Dan. 3.
Likewiſe that other kinde of tryall, whereby, as gold is purified in the furnace, ſo grace in affliction, is mentioned by the Apoſtle, *That the tryall of your faith being much more precious then gold, though it be tried by fire, might be found unto praiſe, and honour, and glory.* 1 Pet. 1. 7.
So *Iob*, *He knoweth my way, and tryeth mee, and I ſhall come forth as gold.* Iob 23. 10
A ſpeech worthy to be (as indeede it is) eternized for ever, and fitly written down by the finger of that bleſſed Spirit, by whoſe mouth it was alſo ſpoken. The Lord (ſaith that holy Patient) knoweth all my wayes; hee knoweth how dearely, more than my ap-

pointed food, I have occounted his Word: hee knoweth that I have followed his steps yet he trieth me, (not because he is ignorant of any thing in mee, for hee knoweth all my wayes, but) first, that as in a furnace the most precious mettal leaveth behind it some drosse, so I from this tryall might come forth much more purified and clensed from my sinfull steynes and pollution; and secondly, that I might be current in his kingdome, even a patterne, as well of his powerfull grace in upholding me, as of patience to them which shall be herafter exercised by like afflictions. A Christian who hath seene and loathed the filthinesse of his sinfull heart, what will hee not bee willing

willing to doe or ſuffer, that he may have it cleanſed? Many weake women will endure much to mend ſome deformity in their bodies, and ſhal not a Chriſtian ſuffer the divels image to bee ſcoured off (although it bee with ſmarting water) that the beauty of God may be imprinted upon him?

But eſpecially it ſhould much refreſh us to know, that hee who hath guided us into this narrow way of affliction, will ſafely lead us through it, and bring our feet into a large place, even the liberty of Gods children: going along with us in all our evil, and upholding us in it for our good, and Gods glory. Surely, if the Furnace heated at once as for ſeven times, could not con- Dan. 3.

ſume the bodies of thoſe ſtout Confeſſors, nay, could not ſinge a thred of their garments, ſo long as the Angell of the Lord was among them; what affliction or trouble ſhal hurt us, when the Lord of Angels is with us, nay in us, ſupporting our weakneſſe, and bearing it out in all our troubles?

5 Laſtly, the many excellent delightfull fruits ſpringing from this bitter roote, will abundantly recompence, and with great, yea, infinite uſury repay all that evill which can poſſibly bee in any affliction. Firſt (which before was mentioned,) *The blewneſſe of the wound ſerveth to purge the evill, and the ſtripes within the bowels of the belly.* It purgeth out the

Pro. 20. 30

old

old leven, and maketh us a new lump. Secondly, the fire of affliction ſoftneth our yron hearts, and prepareth them for the hammar of the Word, to frame us after the image of God, and to ſet upon us the beauty of his holineſſe. It *bringeth forth the pleaſant fruit of righteouſneſſe.* Now what is there in all the world, which if wee might wiſh and have, wee would preferre or equall with this holineſſe? Neither ſhould it too much trouble, nay in ſome reſpect it ſhould cheere us that we find inward terrors, & grievances, doubts, deſertions, buffeters of Satan; we apply outward medicines to infants and weake ones, but inward Phyſicke, as it is given by expert Phyſicians, to the

Ier. 23. 29.

strong, so it worketh more strongly. Inward stripes worke on the bowels, clense the inward man: this shaking rooteth our faith more strōgly, and this disease of doubting occasionally, setleth us in more fulnesse and assurance of faith.

Chap. VI.

The application of this comfort by meditation.

NOw when we have well tasted and swallowed this Cordiall, let us by some meditation, and particular applitation labour to digest it, and even incorporate this spirituall food into our soules. For as it is with this earthly, so is it

it with that heavenly fire of the Word; it will soone bee extinguished, or else lye dead & useleſſe, unleſſe it be blown up by meditation. Thus therfore let the afflicted ſpirit confer and commune with it ſelfe.

Is it not my gracious God who reacheth forth this bitter cup of wormwood to me? Commeth it not from his wonderfull love, and faithfulneſſe in his Covenant; who promiſing to doe mee good, hath therefore in my neceſſity tempered this potion for me? My unfaithfull heart requireth it, his faithfulneſſe giveth it. My dead, cold heart, and the ſicke ſinfull matter in my ſoule calleth for it: his flagrant love, his wiſedome and

compassion administreth it; and shall not I then receive it? If hee sent it in wrath, should not I take it with humility and patience? and if he reach it to mee in love and faithfulnesse, shal not I receive it with chearefull thankfulnesse? *oh* Joh. 18. 11. *shal not I drinke of the Cup which my Father hath given me?* Had it beene a Messenger of confusion, well might I tremble and mourne, yet not murmure, but being an Embassadour of peace, employed purposely for my Soveraigne, and Supreme good, and his glory, shall I not make it welcome? And will not hee worke his owne ends by it? Shall not this bitter root, by his sanctifying power, shoot forth that most pleasant fruit of holi-

nesse

neſſe and glory? Oh thou ra-viſhing beauty of Divine ho-lineſſe, thou moſt excellent I-mage, and nature of God! Oh thou unſpeakeable and un-conceivable happineſſe with God in glory! Shall any thing be unwelcome which bring-eth you to me, or carrieth me to you? Were it water, fire, were it hell it ſelfe, ſhould I not paſſe through it to attayne you? This light affliction bringeth with it a weight of glory: This momentary affli-ction, an eternall glory: this deſpiſed affliction, an excelling excellent glory; and can then the root bee ſo bitter, as the fruit delightfull? Can I with a good will, nay, with plea-ſure, eat a bitter or ſowre ſal-lat, as helping to purge out ſome

some mellancholy humours, and to whet the dull appetite; and shall I not much more swallow this Pil which is bitter onely in the mouth, but in the stomacke ful of sweetnesse and nourishment? Nay, are not all these afflictions (being sanctified by God) especiall evidences of my adoption and filiation through Christ? Are not these stripes so many witnesses that I am his child? And this smart, a sure testimony that I am genuine and no bastard? And with all the rest, hath not he promised and assured me not to fayle, nor forsake me, but to uphold mee in it, and bring mee through it, and comfort me by it, and glorific me after it? Have not all the members of that glorious body,

body, and the Head himſelfe, the Prince of glory, beene *perfited through afflictions*: Have they not all (Head and members) paſſed through this vale of teares, this roaring wilderneſſe, through many feares, terrors, grievous deſertions; *crying out with ſtrong cries, and bitter, to him that is able to ſave them*, yet *ſetting the joy before them, have endured the croſſe, deſpiſed the ſhame, and are now ſet downe in the glory of God.* Now therefore, *rejoyce my ſoule in tribulations, knowing that tribulation bringeth forth patience, and patience, experience; and experience, hope; and hope maketh not aſhamed, becauſe the love of God is ſhed abroad in our hearts by the holy Ghoſt, who is given to to us. Nay count thou it exceeding*

Heb. 2. 10.

Heb. 5. 7.

Heb. 12. 2.

Rom. 5. 3.

Iam. 1. 2.

ding joy, when thou fallest into these temptations, knowing that the triall of faith bringeth forth patience.

Onely thou (oh my gracious God) who scourgest every Sonne whom thou receivest, receive mee whom thou scourgest. Thou who chastisest where thou lovest, oh love this poore soule which thou chastisest! Thou who correctest not for thy pleasure, but for our profit, oh teach me to profit by thy correction! Make my soule to partake of thy Sonnes holinesse, and then lay on what measure thou seest good of his affliction. Oh let me be conformed to his death and sufferings, that I may bee conformed to his life and resurrection. Gracious Father,

after

after thou hast crowned mee with his thornes, crowne mee also with his glory.

CHAP. VII.

Comforts arising from the Word.

NOw as good Chyrurgians often heale some sores with lancing, and cure with wounds; so the Lord most frequently openeth some passage by affliction, and maketh an issue for the sinfull corruption of our soules, to drayne them, and draw out the sinfull matter which is in them; and maketh a lesser wound to cure the greater. But as hee useth these lancers and corrosives, so also hath he singular lenitives and

anodynes to comfort and ſtrengthen the wounded Spirit. Three eſpeciall meanes hath the wiſedome of God ſet out for ſovereigne Cordials to a ſicke ſoule: Firſt, his Word: Secondly, thoſe holy myſteries which we ordinarily call Sacraments: Thirdly, Prayer: all of them fitted by his wiſedome to our neceſſity, and excellent helpes, as well to preſerve the ſound, as to heale the bruiſed heart. For Prayer is as the opening of a feſtered wound, and letting out the filth of the ſoule, that corrupt core of the old *Adam*, which filleth it with payne & anguiſh. The Word is as the playſter, which applying the death and reſurrection of Chriſt unto the ſore, as well rotteth

rotteth and draweth out the ſinful matter, as alſo quickneth the ſounder part, and cauſeth the ſpirit to grow and wax in health and ſtrength. The Sacraments are as Roulers binding on, keeping cloſe and faſt the playſter to the part affected. Of all theſe ſomething would be noted ſeverally, but briefly.

To begin with the Word, I purpoſe not to gather thence all thoſe comforts which are every where ſtored up in it, this taske would take up al the time of *Methuſelah*. It ſhall be ſufficient evidently to demonſtrate, firſt, That God hath given his Word to be a comfort to his choſen; and ſecondly, wherein generally it may be applyed unto us as a ſoveraigne

raigne Cordiall. Neither doe I intend to distinguish between the Word written and preached, the substance being in both the same, and the difference onely in the meanes and manner of conveyng it unto us; the one being as the Salve in the lumpe, the other as the same Salve, spread and applyed. Sufficient is it, that whether it bee delivered by hand or mouth, *it is our comfort in affliction*, and *that which quickneth us. When wee are ready to perish in affliction, it is our delight.* Oh when the spirit of a man is wounded with the sting, and vexed with the smart of sinne, when being strucken with the curse of the Law, it is sicke at the heart, striving and strugling for life with

Psal. 119 50. 92.

with helliſh agonyes; *How ſweet then are his promiſe, unto our mouth? more then honey unto our taſte.* Looke as a weary and fainting Traveller, ſtifled with duſt, and melted with heat, is revived with a coole ſtreame, and gentle breath of ayre, ſo the ſoule of an humbled ſinner tyred and tormented with fiery temptations, is wonderfully refreſhed with thoſe ſweet breathings of the bleſſed *Spirit*, and theſe waters of Life flowing from the Sanctuary. *As are cold waters to a weary ſoule; ſo are good newes from a farre Countrey.* Never did the chaſed, and embоſſed Hart ſo longue for the rivers of water, or more greedily plunge, or bathe himſelfe in them when he had found them, as the af-

Pſ.119.103

Pro.25.25.

afflicted Conscience, pursued by Satan, and hunted by the cryes of his owne lowd sins, thirsts, pynes, and even fayntes for those joyfull newes of peace brought downe from heaven. Now to this very end was the Word written,

Rom.15.4. That *wee might have comfort from the Scriptures.* And therefore are wee commanded to

1 The.4.18 *comfort one another with those words.* To this end was it put into the mouthes of Gods Messengers,

Psal.50.4. *That they might administer a word in season to him that is weary*; who are therefore with a fearefull adjuration straitly charged *to comfort*,

2 Tim.4. 1,2. for so signifieth that word (παρακαλεσον) the *English (exhort.)* And verily, therefore themselves are ordinarily more

more exercised with afflictions, and in them sustained, and comforted by the blessed *Spirit*, that they may be the better experienced, and more able to comfort the afflicted: so that their affliction is for others consolation. Certainly, whether we consider the Word of God without us, either as a Torch or Lamp going before us in these darke and slippery wayes; or as a Guide behinde us, when we are ready to turne out of the way, to the right hand, or left; or whether we consider it as a Seed within us, immortall to beget us unto eternall life, and fruitfull to feed and sustayne us in it, how great in all these particulars, is the consolation which a weary soule receiveth by it.

2 Cor. 1, 4, 5, 6,

Is

Is it a ſmall comfort to a weake and ſliding foot, travelling in a darke and dangerous way, to have a light before him, directing where to ſtep and tread ſafely? Is it not a great vexation when wee are journeying in a vaſt and perillous deſeit, that wee neyther know the way, nor have any hope of direction? Oh when
Gen. 37.15 wee are wandring (as *Ioſeph* ſeeking for his Brethren) travelling in a ſearch for the Lord Jeſus, ſtragling in a ſolitary way, ſeeing no print of any foot before us, how welcome then would any man of God be unto us, who would ſet us in the path which leadeth to Life, and that Lord of Life? Can weaccount it a light bleſſing that the Lord went before

fore his people in a pillar of a Cloud by day, and a pillar of fire by night through that roaring wilderneſſe, till they arrived at that land of *Canaan?* But how much greater a mercy doth God vouchſafe us, in allowing us ſo perfect a Guide which ſhall never leave us till wee are brought unto himſelfe, and to our eternall and glorious reſt: which is not onely a piller of fire, or cloud, to point out the way unto us, but a ſtore-houſe alſo, filled with all needefull helpes to ſupply us in the way, and furniſh us in all our wants and neceſſities.

Are we hungry? it is our food: Are we thirſty: it is a Well of Life: Are wee ſtung with that fiery Serpent?

it

it holdeth out the braſen Serpent unto us: Are we aſſaulted with ſtrong enemies? It is the ſword of the Spirit wounding that crooked Serpent, and keeping off thoſe *Principalities, powers, and ſpirituall wickedneſſes in high places.* Are wee reſiſted in our poſſeſſion by theſe curſed *Canaanites* (whoſe ſtature and wals were up to heaven) our ſinfull corruptions? It is the *mighty ordinance of God to batter downe theſe ſtrong holds, and high towers exalted againſt the knowledg of God, and to bring every thought in ſubjection to Chriſt.* But above all the reſt, how ſweet a comfort is it that even in the horrours of death, and agony of temptations we comfortably finde and feele it in us as a powerfull ſeede of life,

Eph. 6. 17.

2 Cor. 10. 4, 5.

life, quickning and repayring our fainting ſoules, ſo that when wee are ſunke in the depths of tryall, and ſeeme even incloſed in the belly of hell, it underproppeth the weary hand, & ſharpneth the voyce of our drooping faith, ſaying, *yet God is good to Iſrael.* Pſal.23.1.

Surely, when I heare the Lord with his owne voyce teſtifie, That *when this better part is choſen, it ſhall not bee taken away:* when his holy *Spirit witneſſeth to our ſpirits, you are borne not of mortall but immortall ſeed, the Word of God. All fleſh is graſſe, and the glory of it as the flower of graſſe: The graſſe withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away; But the word of the Lord endureth for ever:* and againe ſtrongly aſſureth us, *that*

Luk.10.42

1 Pet.1.23 24,25.

1 Ioh.3.9. *we cannot fall wholly, or finally away by sinne, because the Seed of God remaineth in us.* I cannot conceive what any soule could wish to it selfe more comfortable on earth. *Riches have wings as an Eagle, and flye away.* Pro.23.5. *Hell hath opened her mouth wide to swallow the glory, pompe, and joy of the mighty.* Esa.5.14. *Beauty is vanity, and favour deceitfull.* Pro.31.30 *All our strength but sorrow and labour.* Psal.90.10 Children, if good, our continuall feares; if evill, our perpetuall griefes: and in a word, *Every man in his best earthly estate altogether vanity:* Psal.39.5. Life decreasing by the growth of it; the earth, yea, even the heavens also passing away; but this blessed Word never passeth; never, but as the truth of God, in his covenant with

with Chriſt, hath evidently expreſſed: *My Spirit, and my Word which I have put in thy mouth, ſhall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy ſeed, nor out of the mouth of thy ſeeds ſeed from henceforth, ſaith the Lord, for ever.* Verily, were there no other comfort to a Chriſtian, but only that word of Truth, the ſeed, and food of everlaſting life, begetting him to God, and ſtill remayning and waxing in him, it were ſufficient, (if the ballance be even, and the hand ſteddy which weigheth it) to ſinke downe all the diſcomforts of this world, and to eſtabliſh a Chriſtian heart with ſtrong conſolations, and glorious rejoycings. Eſa. 59. 21

CHAP. VIII.

More speciall comforts from speciall parts of the Word.

LEt us descend into some few specials, and insist a little upon the mayne parts of these holy writings. Now the Scriptures, (as I conceive) may not unfitly bee divided into these foure generall heads. First, the *Doctrinall*, wherin the blessed Spirit teacheth and instructeth us in all necessary truths. Secondly, the *Historicall*, in which as wel the good examples of the Saints, and their happy successe, as also the perverse behaviour of wicked Rebels, and their miserable issues are

set before us. Thirdly, the *Prophetical* (so more specially called) where the men of God encourage, strengthen, and excite us to walke in that good way which is pleasing and acceptable to the Lord. Fourthly, *Practicall* (as the Psalmes, &c.) wherein the constant practice of the faithfull, and their actions, as well within as without, are lively represented to our eyes.

Now what great helps and comforts in every one of these doth that holy *Spirit* reach forth unto us? Consider our estate, and their use. Wee are Travellers through this wildernesse of sinne, toward the heavenly Jerusalem, ignorant, and wandring, soone weary and faint. How usefull then,

how helpfull are all these unto us? The first is as an open Kings high-way to conduct us. The second is as a Guide, treading, and beating a path before us. The third as goads & nayls to rouze up our sluggish nature, and hold fast our slippery feete from back-sliding. The fourth as chearefull company, heartning & refreshing our drooping spirits, when our weake hearts begin to tyre, and those good wayes wax tedious to sinfull flesh. Let us now handle some of these particulars in severall.

Surely, whatsoever comforts a wayfaring man could wish in his journy, are in these helps offered, and given him: The first thing that a Traveller desires, is a good way: oh when the

the wayes are first plaine, and easie, not hard to finde: Secondly, when they are cleane, not deepe and miery: Thirdly, when they are even; not mountaynous, and rocky: Fourthly, when they are strait, not crooked and winding, then are they accounted very good, and are no little helps & comforts to any Traveller: Nay, in such wayes we goe not only with patience, but with delight.

Thus the wayes of God in his Word, are first *plaine to him that understandeth*: not onely a plaine way, but light too, in the way, *Psal.* 119. 105. not like these earthly, but that heavenly way. For as that (*via lactea*) or milkey path, (as it is called) in heaven, which by Pro. 8. 9.

the infinite lights, ſtucke very thicke in it, embrightens it ſelfe: ſo, *the path of the juſt, is as the ſhining light which ſhineth more and more unto the perfect day*. Secondly, they are cleane and pure, *very pure* (*Pſa.* 119.140.) not a ſpot of ſinful mire in them; ſo farre from entangling, and encombring our feet, that they rather haſten and quicken us. Thirdly, they are very even & ſmooth, not ſtony and troubleſome; *Vallies filled, mountaines plained, and roughneſſe ſmoothed*: Very *eaſie and light*. *Mat.* 11.30. no *way grievous*, 1 *Ioh.* 5.3. nay, very pleaſant, and *ſweet above the honey, and honey-combe*. Laſtly, they are right and ſtrait, no crookednesſe, or perverſeneſſe in them. See *Prov.* 8. 8, 9.

Pro.4.18.

Pſa.19.8,9

Luk.3.5.

Pſa.119.103

Pſa.19.8.

Luk.

Luk. 3. 4, 5.

And what marvell then, if they who have walked in those wayes, have beene wonderfully delighted, and even ravished in such paths? *They are wayes of pleasantnesse, and paths of peace,* in which we finde all the rich treasures and jewels of wisedome, eternall life, and perfect blessednesse. Pro. 3. 17.

A second comfort that a Traveller would wish in his journey, is a perfect Guide. Now then when we remember our stupid, and more than beastly ignorance, that even when the way is plaine and strait, yea, pleasant, yet we can make no progresse without a Guide, as is manifest by the cõfession of that good *Eunuch* (*Acts* 8. 31.) and the experience of every

good Christian, what a com-
fort is it that God hath given
us so many directions, and ex-
cellent Guides, walking in e-
very good path before us; If
wee desire to travell in the
way of faith, the Father of the
faithfull will lead us the way,
and chearefully call us after
him, *Who against hope beleeved*
Rom. 4. 18 *in hope, and being not weake in*
19, 20, &c *faith, considered not his owne bo-*
dy now dead, nor the deadnesse of
Sarahs wombe: He staggered not
in the promise through unbeleefe.
So likewise that Guide and
Captaine of Gods people,
who went before them from
Ægypt unto the land of Ca-
naan, will march before us in
that way of faith to the land
of Promise, whose piercing
eye of faith *beholding him who*

is

is invisible, and fastened on the recompence of the reward, despised the wrath of the King, and chose the afflictions of Gods people before the pleasures of sinne, esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt. Heb. 11. 25 26, 27.

Would we walke in love? We have choyce of excellent Guides. In that love of Christ how chearfully will that holy Penitent (converted *Mary*) point, and tread out that path for us? *Who having much forgiven her, loved much*; and thought nothing too deare, or precious for the beautiful feet of that great Apostle, and Prince of peace. Oh how powerfully will that chosen Vessell draw us after him in this tract of love to the Lord Jesus. Luk. 7. 47. Rom. 10. 15.

Jesus, and to all his members? *How did the love of Christ constraine him? How did hee rejoyce in tribulations, bonds, and death it selfe for Christ? How did his heart burne and flame in charity, who could willingly spend, and be spent for them whom the more abundantly hee loved, the lesse hee was loved againe?* Who weying the profit of the Churches with his own glory in Christ, *was in a strait*, and knew not which to preferre, whether his owne infinite and glorious happinesse with Christ in heaven, joyned with some losse to the Church, or the advantage of Gods people, joyned with infinite miseries which he suffered on earth.

2 Cor. 5. 14

2 Cor. 12. 15.

Phil. 1. 22, 23, 24.

If we desire a Guide in the way of patience, that holy

Patient

Patient offereth himſelfe unto us. He ſteeling his reſolution, and whetting it upon a ſtrong faith, *Though hee ſlay me, yet will I truſt in him*: eutteth his way through thornes and bryers, infinite grievances of body and ſoule, and reſteth in this confidence, *When hee hath tried mee, I ſhall come forth as gold.* Iob 13.15. Iob 23.10.

Conſider now how comfortable to the Iſraelites in the Deſart, was that Piller of a Cloud, and fire, walking before them, and pointing out fit lodgings for them: But oh how much more chearefull is this Cloud of the faithfull Saints, leading the way; and infinitely above them all the Lord Jeſus himſelfe, the *Author & finiſher of our faith*, who Heb. 12.1.

in

in all these, and every other good path, not onely guideth us with his foot, but upholdeth us with his hand, and maketh his example as well a patterne to governe our steps, as a staffe to support our weak soules, till wee rest for ever with him in glory.

Chap. IX.

Comforts from the Prophetical and Practicall Scriptures.

ANother cõfortable help in a long journey especially if the beast which carryeth us be dull, or stumbling, is good furniture: In such an occasion who would willingly set out without strong reynes,

reynes, a ſharpe ſnaffle, a ſpur and ſwitch to quicken his ſlow beaſt. Oh then what ſolid and plentifull conſolation will thoſe Prophetical Scriptures poure forth unto us. For when wee conſider our untoward diſpoſition, by reaſon of ſo much ſinne cleaving yet ſtill ſo faſt unto us, when wee remember how ſlow and ſlippery our affections are, which carry on our actions in the wayes of life, it cannot but be a great comfort that the Lord hath given us meanes to caſt out this frowardneſſe, and to bring into order our diſorderly nature. I will inſiſt onely in two particulars of our corruption.

First, although our gracious God hath by the light of his

Word

Word as well discovered the way of life leading to himselfe, and cleared our eyes to discerne it, although hee hath given us the hystorie of his Saints as excellent Guides, to direct us, yet how dull and sluggish are we, how heavy in every good duty? *How dull of hearing? How slow of heart to beleeve? Our hands hang downe, our knees how feeble?* Now the words of the wise are as goads to quicken our sluggishnesse.

Heb. 5. 11.
Luk. 24. 25
Heb. 12. 12
Eccl. 12. 11

Secondly, wee are as slippery as we are sluggish. I appeale to any Christian who hath any knowledge of himselfe, what trouble, griefe, and wrastling hee findes in himselfe to hold fast his heart from starting and wandring in every service of God. If we

looke

looke to our minds, how slippery our memories? In retayning that good word of God, very few.

In which respect we often enforce our gracious Teacher to chide with us. *Can a Maid forget her ornaments, or a Bride her attire? yet my people have forgotten me dayes without number.* Ier.2.32. *Doe you not remember the five loaves, &c. You have forgotten the exhortation.* Mat.16.9. Heb.12.5. Our harts and affections how sliding? Nothing *so deceitfull: readie to depart from the living God.* Ier.17.9. Heb.3.12. *Salomon loved the Lord, and walked in the waies of David his father:* 1 Kin.3.3. But wee see how soone that love cooled in him. The *Galatians* loved *Paul*, even to *plucke out their eyes, and give them to him.* Gal.4.15, 18. But how soone left

left they to be *zealously affected in that which was good?* And as their affections were to the Minister of the Gospell, so to the Gospell it selfe, soone removed to another Gospell. How fervent was that first love of the *Ephesians?* But it quickly decayed. The *Israelites* when they heard the Lord speake out of the fire, solemnly protested, *Speake thou unto us all that the Lord our God shall speake unto thee; and we will heare and doe it.* But *how suddenly had they corrupted themselves, and turned out of the good way?* How earnestly was *Peter* resolved, and vehemently promised, *that he would dye with Christ, and not denie him.* But oh how soone, how easily, and fearefully he slipt, and headlong fell into an

Gal. 1. 6.

Rev. 2. 3, 4

Deu. 5. 27.

& 9. 12.

an utter denyall with oathes and curſes.

Now then when a Chriſtian is caſt downe in the ſight of this his ſinfull corruption, how comfortable is that Ordinance of God (which hee knoweth to bee appointed, aſſiſted, and ſanctified by the bleſſed Spirit) as nayles, faſtned and driven home, holding in, and keeping cloſe his ſtarting heart unto the feare of God, and not ſuffering it to warpe by this treacherous revolting? Certainly, as that Word ſpoken by Chriſt, fiered the hearts of his Diſciples, that they felt *them to burne within, while he diſcourſed with them, & opened the Scriptures.* So thoſe faithfull Chriſtians, who give up their heartsunto a conſtant rea- Luk. 24 32

reading, hearing, and meditating in that holy Word, shall experimentally find and feele it to bee a fire to thaw their frozen, dead, and sluggish spirits; to put forward and quicken them; strong bonds to tye and knit their wavering affections unto all constancie, and chearefulnesse in Gods service. How doth that reproving Word awaken *David*, rouze, & rayse him from his deepe and long security? How doe those sweete promises quicken him, and, inlarging his heart, hasten his feet to *runne in the way of Gods Commandements.*

2 Sam 12.

Psal. 119. 32, 50.

The same effects of this blessed Ordinance our experience teacheth us, in which respect not onely those precious promises,

miſes, but even thoſe ſharpe reproofes alſo are ſweet and comfortable : bitter indeede in the mouth, but ſweete and very cordiall to the inward man ; ſtirring up our ſleepy nature, daſhing out that ſluggiſhneſſe, and binding our hearts more cloſe and faſt in that feare of God, which is the very knot of our Covenant.

Laſtly, how welcome to a weary Traveller is good companie, who will goe along with him in the ſame way, and intend to lodge in the ſame Inne. Much comfort therefore will ariſe to us from thoſe practicall Scriptures, (Pſalms, &c.) For how are we refreſhed in our journey by thoſe pleaſing conferences

rences which we enjoy with thoſe bleſſed Saints.

Looke as in our Travell nothing more chearcth, and maketh us forget all wearineſſe, than good Company, diſcourſing of things profitable, and delightfull: So, when wc goe along with theſe bleſſed Saints, in thoſe practicall writings, opening their very hearts unto us, and unfolding the whole frame of the inward man, [illegible] re-created [illegible]? How sweetly do we forget, & with little or no trouble ſwallow many difficulties & hard paſſages in our journy throgh this wretched world? How cõfortable is the Communion of Saints, even in this life: Our converſation with them is a

little

little Paradiſe. Oh how infinite joy will flow from that holy fellowſhip in heaven? It is one, and not the leaſt part of our happineſſe, that *we ſhall come to that generall aſſembly, and the Church of the firſt-born which are written in heaven*? Now then when wee here converſe and conferre with them, it cannot but be a great delight and refreſhing to our ſoules. And the more, becauſe in all occurrents and occaſions they will furniſh us in any duty. Heb. 12, 23

In receiving of any bleſſing, how ſhall we ſee their hearts ſwell, and their lips overflow with all thankfulneſſe? How doe they melt in humiliation, and ſwimme in teares? How doe they ſharpen their voyces in fervent petiti-

petition? In any desertion, what expressions of longueings? What sighing, pining, mourning? How doe they fill their mouthes with insinuating arguments to wooe the Lords returne, and regain the sense of his favor, giving him no rest till they feele the joy of their salvation restored?

Psal. 51. 12

Chap. X.

The application of this comfort by meditation.

HEnce also may an afflicted Spirit take words unto it selfe, and say; Why doe I thus vexe mine owne heart, and disquiet my selfe in vaine? Doe I not still enjoy the holy & blessed Word of

of my God? Is there any losse which it doth not richly supply? Can I be poore, who possesse those *precious Promises?* Can I be miserable, who attend on the *posts of his dores, and heare him?* If I lose father, mother, house, lands, have not I a promise of an hundredfold for the present, beside that eternal life to come? *Mar.* 10.30. If I am in any distresse, have I not a promise, *that when Father and Mother forsake mee, he will take me up? Psal.* 27.10. Have I not his command to *cast my care upon him? Psal.* 55. 22. and his promise, *That hee will care for me,* 1 *Pet.* 5.7. Have I not his word, that *he will never turne away from me to doe me good? that he will rejoyce in mee to doe me good?* His promise

Pro. 8. 34.

Ier. 32.40, 41.

Psal. 34. 9, 10, is, that *I shall want nothing that is good*; and his word is good, as good as his deed: How then shal I be destitute of any good blessing, who have the *Promise of this life, and the life to come*? 1 Tim. 4. 8. Why then, *oh my soule, art thou cast downe, and troubled within mee*? Is not that immortall seed of the Word cast into thy heart? Doth it not still abide and remaine in thee? Yea, Psal. 23. 4. *though I walke in the valley of the shadow of death, I will feare no evill, for thy rod and staffe comfort me.* Is not thy Word my way? a way leading mee to life? a lamp in the way, enlightning mee, and a Guide with a light directing me? a burning light quickning my frozen heart, when it is dull; a sweete Companion, refreshing

shing me when I am weary? Is it not a plaine way, an even way, a cleane way, a strait, delightfull, and pleasant way? Diddest thou ever, oh my soule, tread one step in it, but that thou so undest some precious Jemme and Jewell? What treasures of knowledge, and wisedome, of faith, hope, love, and every rich grace have there offered, and even thrust themselves into thy hands? Oh what lovely fellowship, what heavenly company, what sweet and ravishing conferences have, and doe I there enjoy!

No sooner stepped I into that path of faith, but instantly that Father of the faithfull went before me, and with an hundred sweet comforts drew

me on to those his steps; that *walking in the same faith, I might obtaine the same blessing*. When I entred into the tract of *Godly sorrow*, and true Repentance, how cheerfully did that weeping *Marie* leade and conduct me? When I set my foot into the way of heavenly love, how fervently did that most zealous Apostle draw mee after him?

Gal 3. 8.

See, see how many glorious Saints; see, oh see the King of Saints and glory, thy gracious Saviour, in every good way directing, sustayning, cheering, and even carrying thee along to that heavenly Paradise.

What my soule? Shal those three Easterne Sages, when one Starre alone leading them

to

to *Christ*, (then a poore despised Infant) *went before them*; shall *they rejoyce, rejoyce with exceeding great joy*? And wilt thou, or for very shame canst thou hang downe the head, when so many heavenly lights, when the *Sunne of righteousnesse himselfe*, comforting thee with his owne, and such his Starres presence, and cheerefull beames, leadeth and conducteth thee to that inheritance of light, and infinite glory? Oh then thou eternall Word, Way, and Light, who hast brought my feet, and entred them into thy Word (a lightsome way) settleme yet more deepely in it, that my heart may stand fast in thee my way. Put thy Word into my mouth, that my mouth

Mat. 2. 9, 10

(ever talking of it) may grow fruitfull in edification: Oh cleare mine eies with this true heavenly light, that I may behold with joy, the light of thy countenance.

Chap. XI.

Comforts sealed up in the Sacraments.

It hath also pleased our gracious God to adde seals to his Word, *That by two immutable things, wherein it is impossible that God should lye, wee might have strong consolation.* Heb. 6. 18. Certainly, every word of God is infallible. *Heaven and earth shall passe, but not a word that he hath spoken.* God hath not therefore annexed seales to his

his Covenant, that it, or his purpose, but that our weake hearts might bee strengthned and confirmed. How unspeakable is this comfort, that the Lord should be so farre from despising our weake faith, and disdaining our poore soules, strugling under unbeleefe, that hee should yeelde to our weakenesse, and underprop it with these powerfull abetters of his truth? Hee might shake the head at us when hee seeth so little credite given to his Word; but hee rather strengthneth us with these sacred mysteries; which are to us as the hand of Christ, reached out to *Peter*, to save our wavering soules ready to sinke through unbeleefe. The Covenant of God is, *I will be* Ier.32.38. 40,41.

their God, and I will not turne away from them to doe them good, but will put my feare into their hearts, that they shall never depart from mee: Yea, I will rejoyce over them to doe them good. The consolations flowing from this Covenant thus sealed, how strong, how full!

For first, throw downe a man thus sealed up in this covenant of grace, from all the joyes of this world, into a very hell upon earth; Had hee lost all his substance, children, health of body; nay, peace of soule also, in some measure, as *Iob*; yet may hee thence, with strong comfort, infallibly conclude, That this estate is good for him; nay, best for him. For God is faithfull, and his Covenant sure;

ſure, (beyond all poſſibility of deceiving, or being deceived) who hath promiſed, and ſealed his promiſe to doe him good, to rejoyce over him in doing him good. Hence the faithfull ſoule will build this concluſion, and reſt upon it: *It is good for me to be thus afflicted. It is good for mee to beare the yoake in my youth.* Oh, if my faith were as ſtrong as my ſenſe, I ſhould taſte much more ſweeteneſſe in Gods goodneſſe, than bitterneſſe in his affliction. Pſ 119,71 Lam. 3.27

Againe, eſpecially when wee conſider the matter of theſe Sacraments, and nature of theſe ſeales; what rivers of comfort muſt needs flow into the heart of him who rightly partaketh them? Look

as Princes grave their owne portraitures in their seales, sitting in state upon their Thrones, invested with their royall apparell, adorned with their Crownes and Scepters: So the Lord Jesus Christ in these his Signets hath lively represented himselfe in his death, conquering, triumphing and leading captive all our enemies, and even trampling them under our feete. But Princes can grave nothing on their seales but their dead Images: Not so here; For in these the very person of the Lord Jesus is given us, as being not onely represented, but presented and exhibited to the faithfull. The body of Christ feeding and strengthning, the blood of Christ, washing, and

(more

(more than wine) cheering up our fainting ſpirits, is there offred and given us who reach out the hand of faith to receive him. Now how hee ſhould be unhappy, who hath Chriſt, or miſſe of comfort, whoſe ſoule is filled with the Lord Jeſus, it is not poſſible to conceive.

But let us conſider them a little ſeverally.

Baptiſme is that Sacrament wherein God applyes the bloud of Chriſt to waſh us from all the pollution of our ſin, and to communicate unto us his own glorious purenes. Let us therefore take ſome notice, firſt, as well of the filthineſſe of ſinne, as our filthineſſe by it, and then of this excellent pureneſſe.

Cer-

Certaine is it, that our created understanding cannot find power in it selfe to conceive, much lesse words to expresse the infinite loathsomnesse of sinne. Hence is it that in Scripture the wisedome of God resembleth it to all those things which are to our senses most abhorred: sinne to stinking mudde, a sinner to a swine wallowing in that mire: sinne to a loathsome vomit, a sinner to a dogge licking up his vomit: in a word, sinne to death, a sinner to a rotten carkasse, and his throat to an open Sepulchre, exhaling, and belching out stench and putrefaction: so infectious, that one sinne entring into the world, tainted and slue the whole world with sinne, turning Saints into swine,

ſwine, Angels into Divels: ſo loathſome, that even both the materials of man, in the very touch, defile; and the moſt pure and holy duties, paſſing through a ſinfull heart, are altogether abhorred, and abominable: It ſtaineth the very righteouſneſſe of the Saints, (who are not on earth yet abſolutely clenſed from it;) ſo that in it ſelfe it is no better than a filthy clout. This is our eſtate, from which by Chriſt (applied unto us in Baptiſme) wee are delivered.

Levit. 15.

Pro. 15. 8.

Eſa. 64. 6.

Secondly, ponder well what is this image of Chriſt, which Baptiſme imprinteth upon us: It is even the Divine nature, that glorious beauty of holineſſe, which, in God, the bleſſed Angels (above all o-

ther

ther attributes) admire and prayse. *Esa.6.3.* Surely, if any thing can be in God more excellent than other, then holinesse is it: As the face is in the body, so is holinesse in the Lord, the very beauty of the Divine Nature. And as a passionate Lover is even ravished with the presence and sight of his beloved; so is it the compleate happinesse of the creature to behold that face of God shining with that ravishing bewty of holinesse. Men sweare by the greater; but because none is greater than God, therefore God sweareth by himselfe, but in himselfe, by nothing (that I remember) but *his holinesse.* Oh then how unspeakeable is the comfort of this holy Ordinance,

Heb.6, 13. 15.

Psa.89.35

dinance, which cleanſing us from ſuch a filthineſſe, wash-eth us into ſuch a beauty.

Againe, the Lords Supper is that holy Myſterie wherein the Spirit perfecteth this worke which hee hath begun in us, and throughly aſſures us Chriſt.

Looke as when the wax is hard, the firſt impreſſion chan-geth the forme, and mak-th ſome, though no perfect print of the Image ingraved in the ſeale: ſo that Image of God, which by Baptiſme is ſtamped upon us, but by reaſon of our ſinfull hard hearts, as yet in part onely, is by often apply-ing the Lord in that other Seale more perfectly expreſ-ſed, and more lively pourtray-ed in us. So being entred in-

to

to life by Baptisme, wee are nourished by the Lords Supper, and more strengthned, till wee attaine unto full growth and ripenesse.

Chap. XII.

Meditation in these comforts given in the Sacraments.

NOw here againe let us commune with our owne hearts, and say; Why, oh my soule, art thou so distracted, and rent with doubts and distrustfull feares? Hast thou not the seales of Gods Covenant for thee, yea, in thee? If hee will doe thee good, shall any creature bee able to hurt thee? If he will knit my heart to

to him in his feare, what ſhall ſeparate it from his love? Oh be perſwaded (for which thou haſt ſo ſtrong evidence and aſſurance) *That no tribulation, nor anguiſh, nor life, nor death, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things preſent, nor things to come ſhall be able to ſeperate thee from the love of God, which is in Chriſt Ieſus our Lord.* Now therefore caſt thy burthen upon his truth; leane and ſtabliſh all thy hopes upon theſe his ſealed Promiſes. Oh let perfect love caſt out all diſtruſt and feare. Aſſure thy ſelfe hee will not, nay, in his truth cannot faile thee in ſuch aſſurances. How ſhould not he pitty his owne (though never ſo weake) life in thee, who pitied thy death in ſinne? How ſhould Rom. 8. 38, 39.

ſhould hee hate thee now his childe, who loved thee once an enemy? Oh my God, as thou haſt given me an eye, in ſome meaſure, to ſee my ſinfull filthineſſe; ſo haſt thou given me an heart, in the ſame meaſure, to loath my ſelfe ſo polluted and filthy. Lord, thou haſt made mee to know, and I deſire with more feeling, to acknowledge that I am beyond meaſure, beyond mine owne apprehenſion, in nature, horrible and lothſome: my roote, rottenneſſe; my ſtalke, corruption; my fruit, contagion; more vile than the earth I tread on, more polluted than the dung I ſcorne to tread on. But (oh incomprehenſible heigth, depth, bredth and length of thy grace!) thoſe

thoſe thine infinitely pure eies could even then with compaſſion behold this unmeaſurably impure and infectious mire, when no eye pitied me, when I had no pitty on my ſelfe, even then hadſt thou compaſſion on me. When I was caſt out as the execrable and loathſome dunghill of the world, even then didſt thou not deſpiſe me: I was dead in ſinne, ſtinking in the grave of my luſts, yet even then didſt thou ſay unto me, Live. Thou waſhedſt mee with the water of life, the Blood of the Lord Jeſus; annoyntedſt me with the oyle of thy gracious Spirit, and diddeſt ſet *thine owne beauty upon me.* Thou haſt nouriſhed me with the true *Manna, That bread of heaven, which giveth*

Ezek. 16.

Ioh. 6. 32, 33.

giveth life unto the world: And daily doſt thou vouchſafe to renew mee after thine image, and to ſtrengthen thy life and nature in me.

And now my God, is there any thing like this, to be like to thee? Oh what an honour, what a Crowne is this unto me? In all other endowments every creature may excell me: Stones more durable, Plants more vegetative, Beaſts more ſenſible, even Divels more wiſe and underſtanding: But herein haſt thou magnified thy grace toward me thy abject Creature, that I excell other workes of thy hands in that, wherein thou (my glorious God) excelleſt thy ſelfe: that thou haſt printed thy holineſſe, thy Divine image and beau-

beauty upon me, and crowned me with thy glory and honor. Rejoyce then, oh my ſoule, in the Lord, and dance for joy. His grace hath prevented, and farre out-runne thy wiſhes: As the firſt *Adam* loſt all his happineſſe by his ambitious deſires to bee like *unto God in knowing good and evill*, ſo the ſecond *Adam* hath reſtored all happineſſe, by ſatisfying our ambition, in making us like himſelfe, in loving good, and hating evill. The life and eſtate which thou enjoyeſt in Chriſt, the nouriſhment of that life, and the aſſurance of that eſtate, equalleth, and tranſcendeth thy moſt ambitious deſires and wiſhes. *Rejoyce then in the Lord, againe I ſay rejoyce: for the world is thine, things preſent*

Phil. 4. 4.

1 Cor. 3. 22.

sent, and to come, are thine, life and death are thine, nay, the Lord of life is thine, thy portion, the seale of thy portion, and of thine inheritance in glory.

CHAP. XIII.

Comforts arising from Prayer.

A Third Ordinance of God in which hee yeeldeth us much consolation, is Prayer: wherein whether we consider the privilege which wee enjoy, namely, that we dust and sinfull ashes may speake unto the glorious Lord of heaven, and upon all occasions, at any time of need, boldly, through Christ, approach unto his presence, and make all our wants

Eph. 3. 12.

wants knowne unto him; or the power and efficacie of Prayer, that we never ſpeake in vaine, but proſper in all our ſuits; what can bee a greater conſolation to an afflicted Spirit? What? Hath God opened an entrance for us unto his grace, through the meditation which is in Chriſt? Hath he ſet out the Sonne of his love to be our Interceſſour? Clothed him with our infirmities, that he might be an *high Prieſt* for us, merciſull, ſenſible, and tender of our weakneſſe? Hath he appointed this *Angell of the Covenant, to incence and perfume our praiers with his moſt fragrant mediation*, & ſo to bring them into his preſence? Hath hee exempted no time, but made every howre, every minute a ſeaſon

Heb. 2. 17.

Rev. 8. 3.

season for this holy Ordinance so that the ofter wee come, the more welcome; and the more importunate our suit, the more sweete and pleasing: Hath hee not permitted, but commanded, *Call upon mee in the day of trouble*; and instantly promised, *and I will deliver thee*? Hath he not bid, *Aske*; and assured us, *you shal receive*? Doth hee wish us, *Be carefull for nothing, but in all things let your requests be shewne to God in prayer*? And because *we know not how to pray as we ought*, hath hee given us his *Spirit to helpe our infirmities, and to make intercession for us, with grones which cannot be uttered*? And can any man want comfort, who enjoyeth this privilege of Gods children, and of the favourits

Psal. 50.

Mat. 7.

Rom. 8. 26.

of

of the King of heaven?

But ſome, perhaps, will reply here, Doe not wee ſee many Saints complaine, and have not I found by experience, that God doth not alwayes grant what wee aske?

Anſ. The Rules here of that Ancient Father, are good: *Sometimes God giveth in wrath what is asked of him: ſometimes denieth in love.* And againe, *The Lord is gracious, who often giveth not what we aske, that hee may give what wee ſhould aske.* And yet againe, *God alwaies heareth us, not alwaies our wils, but alwaies our profit.* God giveth the Iſraelites fleſh in wrath, and with ſtore of fleſh, *leanenesſe of Spirit.* He giveth a King in anger, when they aske him, but hee denyed *Paul* in

Aug. de ſer. Dom. ſer. 53.

Epiſt. 34.

Pſ. 106. 15

Hoſ. 13. 11

2 Cor. 12.

love, that hee might keepe downe his heart from rising in pride, and stablish it with sufficiency of grace. Sometimes our Children aske of us things which are no way good, and sometimes they aske things that are good, but out of due time; wee give them neither: Thus often doe we, and therefore receive not. But fully to answer this objection, we must by no means forget, that in all petitions there is both a generall intention and purpose of asking good, and a desire of some particular, which we suppose to be good; but through our dulnesse in understanding, and want of a discerning Spirit, may bee good, or evill. Againe, wee must remember, that

that in God there is an infinite wiſedome which clearely and perfectly diſcerneth what either in it ſelfe, or to us is evill, or good.

Now then, if the Lord ſhould ſatisfie us in our miſtake, granting the particular which we cõceive to be good and he knoweth evill) and ſo ſhould deny us the good which he knoweth we intend and purpoſe; this (under a ſeeming grant) were a plaine denyall; whereas the contrary ſeeming a deniall, yet is, (and wil hereafter plainly appeare to be) an evident grant, though not of that which wee ignorantly aske, yet of that which in truth we deſire. Certaine is it, that by reaſon of our great ignorance in asking, e-

very faithfull Christian prayeth with al subjection to Gods will and wisdome (so we are taught as well by precept, *Thy will be done*, as by practice, *Not my will, but thy will be done*;) and as certaine, that what wee so aske, we shall without faile receive. For hee that gave Christ, unasked, to us, when we were enemies, will not deny any grace (when hee is entreated) to them who are reconciled in Christ, and aske in his name. This then is sufficient for a Christian, that he first knoweth, that God hath willed and decreed to give him Christ, and with him all good things, & secondly, that whatsoever he asketh according to that will, he shall without all faile receive, 1 *Ioh.* 5.14.

Mat. 6. ..

Luk. 22. 42

CHAP.

CHAP. XIV.

An Answer to some further objections.

BUt some weake dejected Christian will bee ready to reply; All things indeed are possible to him that beleeveth, but, alas, I have no faith to pray. True it is, that prayer is but the speech of faith, *And how can they call upon him in whom they beleeve not. Faith* (saith that excellent Father) *gives life to prayer, and praier gets strength for faith.*

Aug. de verb. Dom. ser. 36.

For answer, let an humble soule well consider how a man, with griefe, should sensibly feele want of faith, if

he had not some faith to give him sense and feeling? How should spiritual sense be without life, or spirituall life without faith. As he in the Gospel first found his sight in the defect of it, (*that hee saw men like trees,*) So might weake Christians easily discerne some measure of true faith, even in this griefe, and complaints for want of faith.

Againe, we shall easily perceive, in these Complainers, much detestation of sinne, not onely in others, but especially in themselves, and passionat desires to glorifie God in all faithfull service. And from what root can these fruits arise, but from that faith *which purifieth the heart*.

Some others complaine, I know

know well that *fervent prayer prevaileth much*; but I have no heat, no life, no fervour of prayer; but in ſuch duties find a wonderfull coldneſſe, dulneſſe, and even deadneſſe of ſpirit. But let ſuch know, and continually remember, that theſe feelings are very common to Gods deareſt Saints on earth: *I am afflicted verie much,* (ſaith *David,*) *quicken mee, oh Lord, according to thy Word.* Nine ſeverall times doth that holy Prophet call for quickning grace in that onely *Pſalme*; which evidently argueth much ſenſe of ſpirituall dulneſſe and deadneſſe. Pſal.119.107

At ſuch times therefore (*becauſe the Word quickneth us*) let us ſhake out this heavineſſe by ſome meditations on thoſe Pſa.119.50

grounds of prayer which we finde in the Word.

Now these grounds are either such as are within, or without us: Those within are first some feeling of a grievous defect and want; secondly, some apprehension of good in the things desired. The outward are, first, the ability, secondly, the bounty of those whom wee aske. Now as where in much want there is no feeling of any defect, or if there bee sense, yet no desire of supply, there no man will seeke out for helpe: So, when all these concurre, yet will wee not aske, where either there is wrll, but no power, or much power but no wil to succour us. But when a man findes at home nothing but

but want and beggery (as wel want of all neceſſaries, as want of ſtrength in himſelfe to procure them) and this want ſtirreth up hunger, hee will ſoone leave his owne bare walls, to get reliefe of ſome rich and bountifull perſon.

And according to the meaſure of theſe grounds will be his diligence in uſing meanes, and ſeeking help: where there is much ſenſe of much want, ſtrong deſires of ſupply, certaine knowledge of great ability and bounty in ſome neere neighbour, there alſo the putting forth of meanes to procure relief wil be anſwerable.

Now then let a Chriſtian, who deſireth to ſharpen his voyce in prayer, whet

his heart with serious meditations: 1. Of his desperate wants; want of all necessary grace, want of all power to supply it of himselfe. Consider that thou art *poore, wretched, miserable, blind and naked:* Rev.3.17. *no sufficiencie in thee to thinke one good thought.* 2 Cor.3.5 2. When thou hast taken a good view of thy many and grievous wants, ponder well the necessity of the grace which thou wantest: Remember the profit, the sweetnesse, the excellency of it; that *All things are dung and losse in comparison of the excellent knowledge of Christ, the vertue of his resurrection, and conformitie to his death.* Phil.3.8. 10. By this meanes thou wilt finde thy desires to bee kindled within thee. Then set before thine eyes

eyes that Father of Lights, from whom (as beames from the Sunne) flow out infinite ſtreames of grace and goodneſſe toward his creatures: weigh diligently that hee is *rich, infinitely rich to all that call upon him:* gracious, infinitely gracious to thoſe who ſeeke him in Chriſt. Men grow poore by much giving: but hee, the more hee gives, the more he may. No end of his ſtore, no end or beginning of his goodneſſe: inſomuch, that where hee once giveth, there he ever giveth; one grace ever making way for another, and the more thou deſireſt and askeſt, the more welcome; and the more excellent the things which thou beggeſt, the more ſure thou art to receive

Rom. 10, 12.

Mat. 13. 12.

ceive them. If *Salomon* aske wisedome, hee shall have it with advantage of other blessings which he asked not: how much more when thou askest holinesse? Oh if thou aske, Give mee thy selfe to be my Father; give me thy Sonne to be my Head and Saviour; give me thy holy Spirit to bee my life and quickner; give me obedience to all; How shouldst thou misse? Thou which art a parent, how willingly canst thou (being thy selfe evill) give good things to thy child, though the more thou givest the lesse thou hast; but if hee aske wisely, things that are truly good, not toyes, and trifles, how art thou delighted in his petitions? how gladly dost thou give him with increase, what-

whatsoever hee intreateth? *How much more shall your heavenly Father give the holy Spirit to those that aske him?* Remember the example of blind *Bartimeus*. Hee feeling the great misse of his eyes, and the discomfort of perpetuall darkenesse, and knowing well that as in himselfe there was no helpe, so in Christ (*as being the light of the world*) there was both infinit power, and grace, (as denying none that came unto him laden & oppressed) never ceased crying, *Iesus thou sonne of David have mercy on me*. They discourage and rebuke him that he should hold his peace: what then? Did he sit downe and cease? No, but whetted with the remembrance of his own misery, and Christ

Luk. 11. 13

Mar. 10. 46 &c.

Christ his mercy, *Cried out so much the more a great deale, Iesus thou sonne of David have mercy upon mee.* Remember how earnestly, and uncessantly he sued; remember how he prospered in his suit. Now *goe thou, and doe likewise.* Sharpen thy desires with serious meditatiõ on thy wants: set before thine eies this power and bounty of the Lord, and then intreat, beg, sue, importune his favour, and never give him over, till hee give thee in thy request. Nor let thy spirit faint, but know thou shalt obtaine as sure as God is true. Thou canst not faile, because he cannot be unfaithfull.

Luk. 18. 1.

CHAP.

CHAP. XV.

The application of this comfort by meditation.

NOw then when thou findeſt thy Spirit caſt downe within thee, rowze it up with ſome ſuch meditation.

How is it (my Soule) how is it, oh thou of little faith, that thus in the day of trouble thou refuſeſt comfort? Haſt thou not good leave, yea, a precious liberty, nay, a ſweet command from thy gracious Lord, *Is any man afflicted? let him pray.* *Oh my my Lord, Shall all fleſh come unto thee, becauſe thou heareſt prayer?* And ſhall not I who have had ſo much experience, *how often thou haſt enclined thine eare unto me, ſhall not*

Pſal. 77. 2.

Iam. 5.

Pſal. 65. 2.

Pſalm 116. 2.

Psal.138.3

not I call upon thee as long as I live? In the verie day that I cried, thou hast answered mee, and strengthenest mee with the strength of thy right hand in my soule. Can I then want comfort, who have thine eare to heare me, thy compassion to pitty me, thy strong hand to relieve mee?

Iam.5.13.

Is there no time untimely in prayer, no season unseasonable, but the time of affliction the very set howre of audience? (*Psa.*50. 15.) and shall I not then take hold of this privilege, and use it with cheerfulnesse? Oh my heavenly Father, even I a sinfull wretch wil give any good thing to the childe of my body, when he asketh: But if he desire me to teach him things profitable, his book, his trade, his

his duty to thee, to my ſelfe, and others, how joyfully doe I heare him? how gladly doe I inſtruct him? how willingly reward him? How then ſhouldeſt thou (ſo infinitely good) ſo (beyond all that I can thinke) gracious & bountifull, deny me thy poore creature begging of thee any thing that is truly good, eſpecially when longing after thee & thy righteouſnes, in *this barren and thirſtie land, my ſoule panteth and fainteth for thy preſence*; and for that holy Spirit, *whereby I call upon thee Abba Father?* Oh how ſhouldſt thou not (according to thy Covenant) *delight in me to doe me good*, and as thou haſt promiſed, rejoyce over me to give me my hearts deſire? Zeph. 3. 17

Now then thou, my gracious Father,

Father, who art more ready to give thy Spirit, than wee to aske him, even that Spirit of Prayer and supplication; Thou who hast commanded, *Call upon mee in the time of trouble*, and hast promised, *I will heare thee*; Heare now the supplication of thy servant, and when thou heareſt, be mercifull. Thou who commandeſt, *Seeke my face*, and haſt given thy ſervant an heart to anſwer, *Lord thy face will I ſeeke: oh hide not thy face from me, nor caſt thy creature away in diſpleaſure*: Yea, oh my God, quicke thy ſervant in the ſenſe of my want and miſerie, and in the knowledge of thy powerfull grace and mercy, *alwaies to pray, and never to faint*: So, *though I walke in the midſt of trou-*

Pſal. 13

Pſa. 27. 8, 9

Pſ. 138. 7, 8

troubles, thou wilt revive me, and perfect that which concerneth me.

CHAP. XVI.

Comforts arising immediatelie from God himselfe.

And first in generall.

LOoke as a vessell, which is coutinually driven downe by the current of any River, will at length fall into the maine Sea, which being the common store-house of waters, both supplieth the want, and receiveth the over-plus of lesser streames; So when our soules have beene carryed along within these narrower bankes of comforts, they will easily bee wafted into that wide

wide Ocean, whence every consolation floweth, and into it ebbeth againe, and emptyeth it selfe. Certainly, the final comfort of a Christian soule, into which all the rest are resolved, is God himselfe, infinit in all goodnes, & unchangeable in his love, and therefore an unexhausted Well, a standing & overflowing fountaine of infinite consolations.

Hence as hee challengeth this title, and calleth himselfe *The God of patience and consolation*; nay, *The God of all comfort*; so his faithfull servants, from their experience, confesse him every where their strength, joy, portion, inheritance, their Rocke, Towre, Shield, Fortresse, &c. Well might *David* rejoyce and glory

Rom 15.5.
2 Cor.1.3

glory in the Lord : *My flesh* (saith hee) *faileth, and my heart also; but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever.* How strong and invincible was that faith, and by it that comfort of *Iob* ? *Although he kill me, yet will I trust in him, and hee shall bee my salvation.* And how answerable was their practice to this their profession : Doe but consider what wee read of these holy men.

Psal 73.26

Iob 13.15, 16.

David being driven from his native Countrey, and from his Fathers house, in disgrace with the Court, and in displeasure, nay, deadly hatred of his Prince, deprived of all his deserved honours, the just recompence of his noble service, by th

the malice and tyrannie of *Saul*; and (which he accounted, farre above the reſt, the greateſt miſerie) baniſhed from the holy Aſſemblies, and the houſe of God; affamiſhed, and even ſtarved for want of that Word, (which hee preferred above all the earth) not onely thruſt out from abiding in the inheritance of the Lord, but by the rage of his Adverſaries inforced to ſeeke Sanctuary in idolatous Countries, where hee might have beene ſeduced to ſerve other gods, had yet at length hid his head under the protection of an Heatheniſh King, and found that favour from an enemy, & a Heathen, which he had loſt among his friends, and Gods people.

1 Sam. 26. 19.

There

There he placed himſelfe in a forraigne City with his wives, and ſome few looſe men, who for their owne advantage had followed him. But when hee retireth thither, he findeth the City burned, his wives, and all his ſubſtance; the wives, children, and all the goods of all his followers carried away. Nothing now was left him but his ſouldiers; and they, (grieved and vexed at the heart for their loſſe) take all againſt him, conſpire, intend, and ſpeake to ſtone him: Look out now into all the world, and ſee where you can finde upon earth, one ſpark of comfort for this Saint of God: yet even then when he was utterly deſolate and forlorne, he could ſend up his dejected ſoule 1 Sam. 27.

soule to heaven, and there did finde, and feele infinite comfort in the Lord his God. See the 1 *Sam, chap.* 30. from the 1. to the 7. *vers.*

Doe we not find the like, nay, more in *Iob*? His estate was lost, and for outward blessings (goods, and children) hee was stript as naked as he was borne: His wife left him, but as a snare: His friends come to comfort him, but through the craft of Satan, shake him more than all the rest of his afflictions. His life was yet whole in his body, but his body broken and wounded with *sore plagues from the crowne of the head to the sole of the foot*: But yet the Pro. 18. 14 *Spirit of a man will sustaine his infirmitie.* True; but a *wounded*

ded ſpirit, who can beare? The inner-man embroyled by Satan, and terrors of the ſpirit joyned to griefes and troubles of the body; without, plagues continually renued, *changes, and armies of ſorrowes ſet againſt him*; within, and without, *the arrowes of the Almightie* ſhot at him, ſticking in him, and *their venime drinking up his ſpirit*; *the terrours of God fighting againſt him*, made him the moſt afflicted, and (if it were poſſible for the faithfull to be miſerable) the moſt wretched man on earth: But even then his poore ſoule, over-wraſtled with temptations, caſt downe within him, and almoſt ſmothered with this load and heape of afflictions, could lift up the head to ſearch out the

Iob 10.17.

Iob 6.4.

Redeemer, and find unspeakable comfort in him. *I am sure my Redeemer liveth, and I shall see God in my flesh, &c.* Iob 19.25 26,27.

What was left to those three royal young men (*Dan. 3.*) in that burning anger of the Tyrant, and that sevenfold heated furnace? What to the Apostle persecuted by Jewes, disgraced by Heathens, stoned by the consent of both, and (as a dead carrion) dragged, and cast out of the City; yea, too little esteemed, nay, judged by his owne children in the Spirit? yet were they then even full of comfort in God. Oh consider with what noble courage those three noble Captives defie the roaring of that Lyon, even the fiercenesse of that proud King, and tell

tell him to his Beard, *Our God can, and will deliver us out of thine hand?* With what Christian valour could that great Champion of the Lord Jesus, compassed in, and pressed downe with all the most bitter persecutions of this world cry out Victory, and sing his Triumph? not onely saying with the Heathen, *How light are all these things, how slight lie doe I weigh them?* nay, *These light momentarie afflictions cause to us an excelling excellent eternall weight of glory*, 2 Cor. 4. 17. but, *In all these things wee are more than Conquerors through him that loveth us.* So right is it, oh thou Eternall Truth, which thou hast spoken: *I, even I am hee that comfort you; who art thou, that thou shouldst*

Dan. 3. 17.

Quàm levia sunt hæc quàm hæc non curo?

Rom. 8. 37

Esa 51. 12.

feare a mortall man, & the son of man which shal be made as grasse.

Sure is it God cannot but be the greatest comfort to them whom enjoy him, because he is the greatest good: For even those heathens (as truly observed that most judicious Divine, and learned Father) who consider him by the eye of the understanding, and not by sense, *preferre him above all visible, and corporall, above all intelligible, and spiritual natures: Nor can* (saith he) *any man be found, who thinketh God to be that, than which any thing can be better. In this all men consent, that they advance him above all things.* Let us therefore, from this incomprehensible Sea of consolation, draw out some especiall and particular comforts.

August. de doct. Christ. l. 1. c. 7.

CHAP.

CHAP. XVII.

The more speciall comforts which are in God:

And first in the Father.

NOw as that glorious one God is distinguished into three persons, so may we discerne in Scripture a threefold relation betweene us, and every person; full of unspeakable joy and sweetnesse: God the Father vouchsafeth to bee our father; God the Sonne hath undertaken to be our Saviour; The blessed Spirit giveth himselfe unto us to be peculiarly, and in more specialty, our Comforter.

First, then God the Father maybe considered in this rela-

tion either to God, or the creature: In the first kinde he is a *Father* onely to the *Sonne*, by an essential communication of his substance. In the second, he is a Father either generally to all reasonable creatures, by creation; to Angels (*Iob* 1.6.) who are there called the *children of God*: to men, *Thou art our Father, and wee the worke of thy hands*: and hence *Adam* stiled the *Sonne of God*: or else more particularly he is a Father to the faithfull by grace, and that as well by adoption as by regeneration. For the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ culleth out from amõg the families of worldly men those whom before hee hath predestinated, and bringeth them into his owne family, set-

Esa. 64.8.

Luk. 3.38.

fetteth out for them, and instateth them into a portion of grace, and inheritance of glory:) Read *Gal.* 4. 4,5,6. and *Ephes.* 1. 4,5.) and then by that immortall seed of his Word begetteth them to that *divine nature*; *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Iesus Christ, who according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us. Of his own will the Father of lights hath begotten us.*

1 Pet. 1. 3.

Iam. 1. 17, 18.

It is altogether impossible in this land of darkenesse to behold the infinite light of heavenly comfort which floweth from this relation. For what comparison betweene any earthly estate, and our adoption into heaven? The children of Nobles, and of the greatest Princes in revolution of no

long time fall backe into as meane a condition as the lowest: *Ioseph* and *Marie* lineally descended from *David* (a great and potent Monarch) how soone could they slide downe in the current of this world into a very low estate? Hee a poore Carpenter, Shee his Spouse: Thus is it in all earthly creatures. Looke as in plants many little threeds grow up into a bigge roote, and that shoots forth into a strong and mighty body; which yet being divided into many armes and branches, at length endeth in small twigs: So is it with all the glory of this world; gloriously it seemeth to glister for a short time in a fleshly eye, and to flame and glitter

to the admiration of ſilly men, but as it is blowne up from a poore ſparke, ſo it quickly ſinketh into a little duſt and aſhes. But in this ſpirituall eſtate there is no meaſure in the glory, or time: but as their Father, and elder Brother, ſo are they Kings: for glory, unſpeakeable; for durance, eternall.

For when the Almighty, All-wiſe God, accepteth, and adopteth us for children unto himſelfe, he entreth into an everlaſting Covenant with us of grace and love, and bindeth up our unſtable, ſtarting, and warping ſoules in the bundle of life with a double tye; firſt, of his love to us; ſecondly, of our love to him; *I will never turne away from*

Ier. 32. 40, 41.

them to doe them good: yea, I will delight in them to doe them good: and I will put my feare into their hearts, that they shall never depart from me.

Doe but consider what Spring-tides of infinite consolations flow into our empty soules from this Sea of comfort. Certainly, children receive some comfort from bad parents, much more from good. But what earthly comfort can that child wāt (which is in the power of mā to give) whose Parent aboundeth in love, wisedome and riches. Were a Father onely loving, or onely rich, or wise onely, yeteven from any of these single in a parent some benefit would be reaped by the children; but when they all meet in

sed with much evill in this world? nay, are any men so full of wants and griefes? Surely they neither want any true good, or are oppressed with any thing which indeed is evill, whose wants on earth are richly supplied with excellent treasures of grace and glory, and evils of sense made fruitfull in all spirituall blessings. For this is an especiall privilege of Gods children, that as the wicked are ever cursed, even in their blessings, *Mal.* 2. 2. so the faithfull are ever blessed, even in earthly curses; *all things working together for their good; and that they know, Phil.* 1. 19. Rom. 8. 28.

Doe but observe what a strong foundation is here laid for every faithfull Christian

to

to build up his soule in unspeakeable comfort, and to solace himselfe even in his worst estate. Can any reasonable man deny, but that such a condition is good, comfortable, nay, best, and most happy for a man, which commeth to him from infinite love, assisted with infinite power and wisedome: Now then thus will a faithful Christian conclude in his most grievous afflictions & crosses. Have not I a sure word, and infallible, that all these things come unto me, not only from Gods power and wisedome, but from his love? *He maketh the heavens by his wisedome: In wisedome hath hee done all his workes. Come not all his chastisements from love, from his father-*

Pla. 136.5. Pf. 104.24.

Heb. 12.6, 7.

fatherly loue?

So againe, an afflicted ſoule will hence cheere up it ſelfe in the midſt of all troubles. Howſoever theſe grievances are bitter in the mouth, and ſeeme (when they are taſted by ſenſe and carnall reaſon) very unpleaſant and evill; yet indeede, if I better conſider them, & their nature, looking on them with a ſpirituall eye, I ſhall diſcerne nothing but an outſide, and ſhew of evill, but full within of much ſweetneſſe, and precious treaſure. As that Heathens ſtaffe which hee dedicated to his Idoll, made of horne without, but within filled with gold; or as ſome fruites bitter in the rine, but pleaſant in the pulpe of them: So

So is there here an appearance of evill covering a world of good; when I have taken away the paring, I shall taste the fruit very delightfull and wholesome: they seeme messengers of death, but they bring life; they seeme full of sorrow, yet cause much rejoycing; they threaten poverty, but fill with riches. The evill is in seeming onely, but the good and profit reall. It was a prerogative not proper to the Apostle, but common to all the members of Christ, *that they are as dying, but* (certainly, nay, eternally) *living; as sorrowfull, yet alwaies rejoicing, as having nothing, but indeede possessing all things.* Read 2 Cor. 6. 9,10.

CHAP. XVIII.

Applying these comforts by Meditation.

NOW when wee have throughly beheld, considered, and by faith applyed this truth to our hearts, let us by some short meditation stir up our fainting spirits, and quicken them in remembrãce of this great priviledge given us by God.

Let us take words with us, turne into our owne soules, and say, *Why art thou cast downe my soule, and why art thou disquieted within me?* Hath not the Lord commanded thee, & doubled, and often repeated that command, *Rejoyce in the Lord, againe I say rejoice? Rejoice evermore.* Doe

Hos. 14.2.
Psal. 42.11
Phil. 4.4.
1 The. 5.16

Doe I not see my fellow servants (the blessed Saints of God) cheerfully conforming their behaviour to this charg, and turning their sackcloath into gladnesse? Doe I not see them rejoyce even in tribulations, & casting out earthly sorrow (which kils) fill up their hearts with gladnesse, their mouthes with praises? How doe they sleight reproach, despight of the world, the malice of Satan, and his instruments? & taking up the crosse in a sanctified use of all afflictions, finding the sweetnesse of the fruit, forget the bitter root from which it springeth. Is it not because they neither live, nor walke by sense, but by faith? (See *Gal.* 2.20. 2 *Cor.* 5.7.) Is it not

not becauſe God is their *portion, and their inheritance? Therefore ſetting the Lord alwaies before them, their heart is glad, their tongue rejoiceth, and their fleſh doth reſt in hope?* why then doſt thou droope? why doth thy ſpirit thus ſinke, and is even ſwallowed up with earthly griefes? why doſt thou endure this worldly and killing ſorrow to lodge in thy heart, to poſſes it, & keepe poſſeſſion for death, & ſo to bar out that heavenly gueſt, even the *joy of the ſpirit*, which would mount thee up to an heaven of ſweet conſolations, and ſet thee here in a (leſſer) *Paradiſe* of glory? Pſal. 16. 5. 8, 9.

Is not their *Lord thy God?* haſt not thou ſaid to him, as they, *Whom have I in heaven but thee? and I have deſired* Pſa. 73. 25.

none

none in earth with thee: And hath not he ſaid unto thee, as to them; *I will not faile, nor forſake thee?* And wilt not thou then conclude, *If Father and Mother* (and all the world) *forſake me, yet the Lord will gather me up.*

Heb. 13. 5.

Pſa. 27. 10

Hath not thy gracious Lord and glorious creatour adopted thee unto himſelfe, brought thee home into his houſe, ſetled thee in his Family? Hath he not caſt into thy heart that *immortall ſeed of his Word*, and ſo *begotten thee* unto himſelfe? Haſt thou not found his almighty power, put forth in this quickning word, to raiſe thee up from that grave of luſts, in which thou layeſt dead in ſinnes and treſpaſſes, rotting, and even crawling with

with the wormes of hell? Is the Lord then of heaven and earth, the *Father of Christ*, the *Father of lights* become thy Father, and canst thou want any thing that is good? were there not much more good in this conflicting, and afflicted ſtate then evill, nay, were not this by his over-ruling hand cõverted wholly to thy good; how ſhould it come from him who is infinite goodneſſe, to thee whom he hath infinitely loved?

True, oh moſt true! his love *is better then life*: and nothing can proceed from that love but good; but I cannot ſee that love through theſe teares, through this thicke cloud of earthly ſorrowes. But oh his love is not more ſweet Pſal. 63. 3.

ſweet, then evident; ſee, oh ſee it in his gifts. He hath not ſpared his onely Sonne, but given him to the death, even to the curſed death of the croſſe; *How then ſhall hee not with him give thee all things alſo?* He hath given thee his holy Spirit, the life of thy life, and his owne glorious *ſelfe*; and can he with himſelfe (the infinite incomprehenſible good) give any thing which is not good? Aſſure thy ſelfe whatſoever is given by and with him, cannot but be (through him) good, exceeding good, beyond that which thou doſt, or canſt conceive. Now therefore remember, It is his covenant to do thee good. Know then, (know it of a truth) and throughly perſwade and ſettle thy ſelfe in it, that

that as now thou art under the rod, becauſe it is good for thee to be afflicted; ſo when it ſhall be good for thee, thou ſhalt reſt from al thy trouble, and ſhalt be ſatisfied with abundance of peace. Oh then, my ſoule, bee not thou of an haſty ſpirit, *For he that beleeveth will not make haſt.* Had *Ioſeph* appointed the time of his deliverance; Had the oppreſſed *Iſraelites* ſet out the limits of their Ægyptian bondage; or thoſe three young captive Champions preſcribed their fiery triall, how would they all have hindred their owne happineſſe, and Gods glory? *If my righteous Brethren ſmite me, it is a kindneſſe, their reproofe is an excellent oyle:* What then is the rod of my heavenly Fa-

Eſa. 28, 16.

Pſa 141. 5.

ther, but his fatherly love? What his rebuke, but a rich perfume, and precious balme, clensing my defiled nature, & preserving it from all fleshly pollution? *Rollethen thy way upon the Lord, and hee shall bring it to passe:* wait upon his hand; and remember hee is not *alwaies chiding: For a smal moment hee may forsake, but with great mercies he will gather me; In a little wrath hee may hide his face for a moment, but with everlasting kindnesse will hee have mercie upon me.* Oh then, my heavenly father, who vouchsafest to *wait, that thou maist be gracious to me,* give me power with patience to waite upon thy grace: Thou who makest it thy exaltation and glory to shew me mercy, oh give me

Psal. 37.5.
Psa. 103.9.
Isa 54.7.8
Esa 30.18.

me an hart to attend thy mercy, till thou receiveſt mee to thy glory.

CHAP. XIX.

Comforts taken from the ſecond perſon of Trinity.

AS God the Father hath vouchſafed us that unſpeakeable comfort and honour to be our Father, ſo the Sonne yeeldeth us no leſſe, in that hee undertakes to bee the Saviour of all the faithfull; and not in part, but an entire and perfect Saviour from all evill. For evill may be conſidered either in the roote, or fruit of it; and our Saviour hath utterly aboliſhed both

for us. The greatest evill, and the very root of all other is sinne: and the fruit of sinne is principally (as including all the rest) the wrath of God and death. Now our Lord saves his people (first) *from sinne*, in being a *perfect sacrifice* (*Heb.* 10. 14) and consequently, a *propitiation for all their sinnes*; 1 *Ioh.* 2. 2. Secondly, he delivers his people *from wrath*, and *the curse*, by bearing the curse and wrath for them. In a word he hath redeemed the faithful from all enemies of body & soule. See, *Luke* 1. 71. 74. *Death, Sinne, and the curse of the Law, hee hath swallowed up into victorie*, 1 *Cor.* 15. 55, 56, 57.

Mat. 1. 21.

1 The. 1. 10
Gal. 3. 13.

Obiect. But some weake Christian, perhaps, will here sigh out an objecti-

objection: How hath Christ delivered mee from sinne, when I still finde this cursed law of my members *rebelling against the law of my mind, and leading me captive to the law of sinne?* How am I delivered from death, when nothing is more sure to me than death, & *I dye daily? Ans.* First, observe that the Apostle (who in the person of the faithful uttereth those words) was even then devered frō sin by Christ, and gives thanks in the words instantly following for his deliverance. Hence it is apparent, that even thē whēsin rebelleth in us, nay, by strong hand carrieth us captive, wee are delivered from it; delivered first from the usurping power, and dominion of it, where-

Rom,7.23

Answ.

Rom.6,14.

by

by we were enslaved, and served it with greedinesse; and againe, from the guilt of it; It shall not bee imputed or accounted to us: but wee reconciled to God, 2 *Cor.* 5. 19. Insomuch that where the Apostle confesseth plainly his sins both of omission and commission, yet in this regard hee dares confidently, and doth truly affirme, *It is no more I that doe it, but sinne that dwelleth in me.* Sinne in the faithfull, is as sickneſſe in the body, getting up now againe, and having overcome, yet not wholly freed from al incombrance of the disease. Now as when our children, through bodily distemper, and sickly weakeneſſe, cannot doe what they desire, and endevour to doe, and

Rom. 7. 19, 20.

and doe some things which they hate themselves, and are to us offensive, we impute to them neither their omissions or commissions: so dealeth God with his children.

Secondly, as the Lord by Jesus (the Sonne of *Nun*) brought in his people into the land of Canaan, and trod all their enemies under their feet; yet left some of the Canaanites among them for diverse ends: So is it with us; (For all that story of Israels passage from Egypt to the land of rest, is but as a type, or picture of Gods dealing with all his Saints;) The Lord our God hath given us the true Jesus to lead us into possession of that heavenly *Canaan* our eternall life, and kingdom

of glory. Now hee hath already entred us into that eternall life (for *hee that beleeveth hath eternall life.*) and taken, and holds possession of glory for us. (*For in him wee already sit in heavenly places.*) He hath conquered our enemies, and led them in shew & triumph, yet for some ends hath left some of these enemies, and hath) not yet fully destroyed them.

Ioh. 5.24.

Eph. 2.6.

And as among that people some of those Ganaanits were reserved as enemies, some as servants; the former to *prove Israel, whether they would hearken to the Commandements of the Lord, and to teach them warre*: the other to helpe them in some workes, as the *Gibeonites* (*Iosh.* 9.21.27.)

Iudg. 3.1, 2, 3, 4.

so,

so hath the Lord in the faithfull, left some of these inhabitants of our corrupt nature, as well to teach us spirituall warfare, as to prove us whether wee will cleave to him: and hence is it, that hee frameth for us, and giveth us spirituall armour, and commandeth us to exercise our selves in it. (And such are all our sinfull corruptions and rebellions:) as some also to serve us, to doe some good office for us: and such is death, which is to us, as those servants to the Prodigall, appointed by our Lord and Father to pull off our ragges, that wee may be clothed upon; and as those who tooke *from Iehoshuah his filthie garments, and set a*

Eph. 6. 11. &c.

Luk. 15. 2

2 Cor. 5. 2

Zech. 3. 4. 5

Ester 6, 8. 11.

faire Diadem upon him: As *Haman* to *Mordecai*, who (against his will) *clothed him with royall apparell, set the Crowne-royall on his head, and brought him into the presence of the great King.*

Now then looke as it was with those *Israelites*, and the fierie Serpents, when God had, by the sight of the Brazen Serpent, cured them of their wounds and bitings, especially if withall hee had pulled out their stings, they might be truly said to bee perfectly saved from those Serpents, although they were yet among them, and did many wayes annoy and encumber them: So, when the Lord hath not onely cancelled our sinne, and healed those poysonous bitings of it, but taken out the

1 Cor. 15. 56, 57.

sting

ſting alſo of it, that it ſhall not be able to kill, we are ſaid truly to bee ſaved, and delivered already from ſinne and death; which ſtill are enemies, but not able to effect their malice, or doe any evill to us, which Chriſt hath not, or will not turne to our eternall good and happineſſe.

Surely then this truth, that the Sonne of God bleſſed for ever is our Saviour, is a privilege wonderfull; eſpecially if wee conſider the manner how he wrought ſalvation for us. Looke then firſt to his Incarnation, wherein he fitted himſelfe for our redemption; then to his paſſions and exaltation, whereby he hath perfected our happineſſe, and we ſhall finde unſpeakeable conſola-

solations in every one of them.

First, there is no Creature can boast of so glorious a prerogative, as a faithfull man; that God refusing the nature of Angels, hath taken our nature into him, and become *man like us in all things*: covered, and troubled with the same infirmities, that from the sense of them in himselfe, hee might more compassionately intercede for us, more effectually and speedily helpe us. *The Word was made flesh, Ioh.* 1.14. *of the seede of Abraham, Heb.* 2. 16. *and of David, Rom.* 1.3. conceived in the wombe of a Virgine, and borne by her. Thus hee became one with us; *Flesh of our flesh, and bone*

Heb 2. 16, 17, 18.

Luk. 1. 31.

of

of our bone : ſo nearely was this our nature united to him, that as body and ſoule make up one man, ſo God and man make one Chriſt ; that as the Word is ſayed to bee fleſh, ſo the blood of that fleſh is called *The Bloud of God.* Act.20.28

Secondly, in this our fleſh hee gave full ſatisfaction to the Juſtice of God, by ſuffering in that nature, in which God was offended.

This *Prince of our ſalvation was conſecrate through afflictions. Hee gave his backe to the ſmiters, his cheekes to the nippers, he held not his face from ſhame and ſpitting.* Heb. 2.10. Eſa 50.6.

Hee was attached, bound, accurſed, and condemned as an offender, *in whoſe mouth there*

was

was no guile, by the same Iudg, who knew and confessed himselfe innocent: he was rejected by the heathen, by his owne people, abused, mocked, and scorned by all sorts, nayled to the Crosse, there dyed, and after buried; and not onely swamme through his owne bloud, but waded through the fiery streame of Gods wrath for us. Oh then, if he hath loved us to his death, how much more will hee love us to our life? Will the Lord after all his sufferings lose the soule for which he suffered? Or can he, who thus loved us, being then enemies, that hee chose to beare off the wrath of God for us, by drawing it on himselfe, suffer any part of that wrath to fall upon us, now that

that hee hath redeemed us to himſelfe, killed the enmitie, and drawne our hearts to thirſt, longue, and pine for him and his righteouſneſſe.

Thirdly, that he might perfect us, as hee dyed for our ſinnes, ſo he *roſe againe for our juſtification*: aſcended into heaven, and having received all power and authority, ſitteth at the right hand of God, a continual Interceſſour for us: and ſhall thence *deſcend with the ſhout of an Angell, and the trumpet of God, to raiſe, quicken and receive us to glorie*. I cannot but here, therefore, inſert that ſweet meditation of holy *Auguſtine in Pſal.* 148.

Rom.4.25

Rom.8.34. Heb.7.25.

From his heavenly Countrey hee brought all good things unto us, and in our Countrey endured

all

all our evils; yet promised us, that wee should be there, from whence he came, and said, I will that where I am, they may be also with me. So wonderfull was his love, that because hee was with us in our habitations, wee should be with him in his Mansions. Oh mortall man, what hath he promised thee that thou shalt live for ever; And dost thou not beleeve him? Beleeve, beleeve.

It is more that hee hath alreadie done, then that which hee hath promised: What hath hee done? hee died for thee. What hath hee promised? that thou should'st live with him. It is more incredible, that the Eternall should once dye, then that a mortall should live for ever.

Now

Now wee hold fast what is harder to beleeve. If God dyed for man, shall not man live with God? Shall not a mortall live eternally, for whom hee dyed, who liveth eternally?

Verily, the afflictions of this life are so farre from being worthy of the glory which is purchased for us in the life to come, that rather they are nothing to those comfortable, nay glorious privileges, which wee presently enjoy: For what can any earthly misery, (which at the furthest proceedeth to a temporall death) shew comparable with this union with God, and glorious fellowship with the Father through Christ? Wee are united to God by affinity, by

by a ſpirituall, and therefore indiſſoluble bond of marriage: he hath married our nature, nay, our perſons: hath ſet his owne image on us, & given us his, even the divine nature: and ſo as he is our fleſh, Eph. 5. 30. *ſo we fleſh of his fleſh, and bone of his bone.* We are united to him by a ſpirituall conſanguinity; to the Father, as our father, (*Ioh.* 20. 17.) to the Sonne, as our brother; *Heb.* 2. 11. nay, as members to the Head, *Eph.* 5. 30. And becauſe all fleſhly and mixt union is no way comparable to that ſimple union of Spirits, *We are one Spirit with him*, 1 *Cor.* 6. 17. that as there is no union like that of the Trinity of perſons in the unity of the God-head, ſo wee alſo ſhould be united ſpiritu-

ritually to our God, *That as the Father is in Christ, and Christ in the Father, so wee may bee one in them.* Ioh. 17. 21

Goe to now; Let all the world conspire against us, to load our harts with affliction: let sinfull flesh joyne with the world, and all the infernal spirits with both, if thou hast tasted this cordiall, if ever thou hast truly relished the sweetnesse of the Lord Jesus, (*the strength of thy heart*) all they shall effect is but this; somewhat the sooner, and closer to knit thy soule unto God in Christ, and by with-drawing earthly & sensuall, to heap upon thee spirituall and eternall comforts.

CHAP.

Chap. XX.

The more close applying of this comfort by meditation.

NOw that wee may thoroughly digest this cordiall, and finde some heart and strength in it, let us quicken it by some such meditation. Oh my soule, is there any thing to bee compared unto the Lord Jesus? Is not al in the world, nay, all the world, and a world of worlds in respect of him losse and dung? Hadst thou received no other pledge of Gods love, no other comfort but Christ alone, were not this sufficient, abundant, nay, an infinite testimony of his eternall love, and a consolati-

lation beyond all miſerie? But when hee is given thee, what is not given thee? when thou haſt him who is Lord of all, thou haſt all things with him: Oh if thou hadſt knowledge of this love of Chriſt, which paſſeth knowledge, what trouble, what earthly griefe could diſmay thee? how wholſome, how pleaſant, how delectable, how heavenly is the leaſt taſt of it? O ſweete, gracious, glorious Saviour, whether I look up to thee my head in heaven, or down to my ſelfe thy moſt unworthy mẽber on earth; whether I conſider what great things thou haſt done for my poore ſoule, or how thou haſt done thẽ, I cannot but find infinit love in thee, & infinit cõfort in thy love

Eph 3.19.

Thou

Ioh.1.9. Thou art that true light, all other borrowed from thee. Heb.1.3. Thou art the brightnesse of thy fathers glorie, making and sustaining all things. Thou art the expresse Image of thy fathers person; Phil.2.6 Esa.9.6. God, equall to thy father: The mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of peace. Rev.19.16 Thou art the King of glorie, the King of Kings, and Lord of Lords. how faire, how pleasant, how full of ravishing delights is thy love? Cant 5.13 16 Thy cheekes as a bed of spices, as sweet flowers; thy lips like Lillies, dropping sweet-smelling mirrhe; thy mouth most sweet: Thou art altogether lovely. How is it then that I have found favour in thy sight? who although once framed by thee after thine image, yet wilfully giving up my selfe un-

unto ſinne and Satam, became the moſt deformed, the moſt abject, the moſt polluted, and filthy off-ſcouring of the world. Oh my Lord, I am infinitely unable to conceive either thy glorious excellẽce, or my lothſome vileneſſe, yet haſt thou ſet thine heart upon ſuch an one to love mee, and expreſſed that love by ſuch effects, that neither I can finde words to utter it, nor thoughts to apprehend it; yet faine would I kindle and inflame my cold heart in the ſight and ſenſe of it.

If I caſt downe mine eye to look upon my bottomleſſe miſerie, I ſee my ſelfe *ſhut up, and impriſoned in unbeleefe*, bound in the chains of death, condemned to hell, where the pit

Rom. 11. 32.

pit had shut her mouth upon me: my life consuming in poasting vanity, my soule delighting in the service of such a master, whose wages is endlesse misery; a slave in the world to Satan by disobedience, and after in the other world a companion to him in infinite torment. *Snares, fire, brimstone, and an horrible tempest, this was the portion of my cup.* And as my state was infinitely fearefull, so altogether helpelesse: No creature had either power, or pitty to succour mee; nay, mine owne soule so farre from compassion of it selfe, that it rejoyced and triumphed in this depth of hellish misery. From this, and farre greater calamitie then in this, or any word can be

Psal. 11. 6.

be expreſſed haſt thou graciouſly reſcued me.

Thou reachedſt forth thy hand, and haſt plucked me out of the belly of hel. Thou haſt drawne me out of the horrible pit, where no ſtay was, & haſt ſet my feet upon the rocke in a large place.

Now if I lift up mine eyes to take view of that glory, to which thou haſt ſo graciouſly advãced me, I find my tongue and heart yet farre more unable to utter or conceive it. Hadſt thou left me to my ſelf, (now after this deliverãce) in health and ſafety, yet oh how wonderful had thy grace bin? But this great, this infinit mercy *was a ſmal thing in thine eies, O Lord God:* but haſt promoted me to an inappehẽſible height 2 Sam. 7. 19

glory with thy ſelfe. Thou haſt preferred mee to thy ſervice, and thy ſervice is liberty, nay, thy ſervice is a kingdome, even to reigne on earth. Rev. 5. 10. And as if all this were too little, thou haſt made me a ſonne with thee to the ſame Father, the Father of lights; and what eſtate is any thing but dung to this? Thou haſt annexed me as an heire with thy ſelfe, who art the heire of all things; ſo that by thee, I, the moſt baſe drudge of ſinne and Satan, am lifted up to a throne & crown, to an immortall crown of glory; ſuch as *never eye ſaw, never eare heard, never entred into the heart of man.* 1 Cor. 2. 9. Thou haſt waſht me, ſet thine owne beautious image upon me: thou haſt reconciled, juſtified, fully redeemed

ined me, raiſed, and ſet mee with thy ſelfe in heavenly places; and with all this, and above all this, thou haſt knit and united me to thy ſelfe, and to thy glorious Father; ſo that I (poore worme, duſt, dung) even I might be one, even as thou art in the Father, and the Father in thee, that I might be one in both. *Ob height, depth, bredth, and length of thy love! how incomprehenſible* is thy grace, how heavenly my conſolation? Ioh. 17. 21

And how haſt thou wrought all this for me? O my God, my Lord, my gracious Redeemer; where ſhall I ſeek words, or thoughts to ſet out this mercy? wonderfull is thy love in all the reſt, and that my ſoule knoweth right well; but

in this how farre beyond all possibility of apprehension, & all expressions of wonder? That my miserable mortality might be clothed upon, and
2 Cor. 5. 4. I be borne anew in the divine nature; thou didst strip thy selfe of those robes of divine Majesty, in which thou *knewest it to be no robberie to be equall to God*;
Phil. 2. 6. and wast borne in my weake nature, and found in the servileforme of my fleshly infirmities.

Thou gavest thy body, thou gavest thy soule for my sinne; thou wast bound, thou wast mockt, thou wast scourged, condemned, nailed, and dead on the crosse: Thou (oh mirrhor, oh infinite miracle of mercy!) thou (the love of the Father) didst taste not onely gall

gall and vineger, but even wrath, & hel for me the child of wrath, and brand of hell.

Oh my dead ſoule, canſt thou ſee all this, and want cõfort? Can one cup of wine cheere thy heart, and ſhall not ſuch fruit of ſuch a Vine fill thee with joyes unſpeakeable and glorious? Oh what is thy portion, whẽ ſuch is the price? what thine inheritance, when ſuch the purchaſe? *Rejoyce then oh my ſoule, rejoyce evermore in ſuch a Lord;* and ſuch a love; for whatſoever thou haſt loſt, thou haſt gained Chriſt, & loſt but dung: with him thou receiveſt whatſoever is truly good, and parteſt for him with nothing, but what in ſome reſpect is evill: Have I loſt Parents, Children,

friends, lands, livings, yet I have not loſt Chriſt, nor my Lord will not loſe mee. If I loſe my life with the reſt, yet ſhall I not loſe the life of Chriſt; he is my life, hee *in life and death is my advantage.* Phil.1.21. Let Father, Mother, Brother, Siſter, Wife, Children, forſake, and hate me, yet the Lord Jeſus will never leave me, never ceaſe to love me; and hee is better than a world of friends and kindred. Oh my Lord, to be in heaven without thee were exile; but a ſicke bed, a loathſome priſon with thee is an heavenly Paradiſe. Why then ſhould I be troubled, ſeeing thou haſt made mee to dwell in thee by faith, and thou vouchſafeſt to dwel in me by thy bleſſed Spirit?

Onely, thou my Saviour who haſt loved mee to death, make me ever to live in thee, and in thy love: thou who haſt dyed for mee, plant thy death in mee, and burie my corruptions in thy grave. Tho who waſt crucified for me, crucifie the world to me, the fleſh in mee, and graft in mee the life of thy reſurrection: make, oh make me to re-,oyce in the fellowſhip of thy ſufferings, and in thy good time change this crowne of thornes, into that of glory.

CHAP. XXI.

Comforts which flow from the holy Ghost.

AGaine, with those former (drawn from the two first persons of the blessed Trinity) annexe the consolations of Gods holy Spirit, who dwelleth in the faithfull. Sweete and excellent are these comforts: Neither is it in vaine, that in specialty the *holy Ghost* is called the *Comforter*; as being that person, who is sent by the Father, and the Sonne, by himselfe to worke this effect in us. Let us then remember that this blessed Spirit doth not onely dwell in us by his gifts, faith, love, &c. but personally, which is evidently expres-

expreſſed *Epheſ.* 1. 13, 14. *You are ſealed with the holy Spirit of promiſe, which* (or rather, *who*) ὅς in the Greeke, cannot in ordinarie conſtruction of Grammar, agree with that of Spirit, the one being of the neuter, the other of the maſculine, but the gender purpoſely changed againſt uſe, to ſhew that the perſon of the bleſſed Spirit is with us, in us, and ſo continues, and ſtayes as an earneſt of our inheritance, and our full redemption; in which reſpect wee are called his Temples, 1 *Corinth.* 6. 19. Thus alſo when the holy Ghoſt is promiſed us, *Ioh.* 16. 13, 14. our Saviour alters the gender, and uſeth the maſculine (ἐκεῖνος) *hee*,

the Spirit of Truth: and againe, *he* (not it) *shall glorifie me*: to shew that the very third person of Trinitie is given us: yet hee dwels not in us, as sometime in the Temple made with hands, but as the soule rather dwels in the body, so doth the holy Ghost dwel in the faithfull, quickening, sustaining, & leading them on to the rest of their soules, and Lieging with us. Look as in the body the hart and Head produce life, sense, and motion by the vitall, and animall spirits; which being sent by them, and diffused into every particular member, quicken, and move it; So the Spirit of Christ flowing from him into his mysticall bodie, fils every part with life, sense, and motion. *It is the Spirit,*

Iohn. 6. 63.
2 Cor. 3. 6.

(faith

(ſaith our Saviour, ſo his Apoſtle) *that quickens.* Therefore is he called *our life*; and they that live in *the Spirit, walk alſo*, or move *in the Spirit.* There is alſo ſpirituall ſenſe; *a taſte*, whereby wee perceive the ſweetneſſe of God, of the grace of God, and the word of his grace; whereby the *ſpirituall man ſavours the things of the Spirit*; a ſpirituall touch, and tenderneſſe: when the *Lord takes away the heart of ſtone, and gives an heart of fleſh*: a ſpirituall eye, whereby the *ſpirituall man diſcernes all things*: a ſpirituall hearing, delighting in the Word, and promiſe of God, more than any muſicall harmony; a ſpirituall ſent, whereby the verie name of Chriſt *is as an Oyntment* poy-

Rom. 8. 10. Gal. 5. 25.

Pſal. 34. 8. & 119. 103

Rom. 8, 5

Ezek. 36 26, 27.

1 Cor. 2. 14. 15.

Cant. 1. 3.

powred forth.

Now the holy Ghost doth not onely worke this comfort in us by faith, giving us power to apprehend things absent, or to come; but applieth them more immediately by this verie sense, so that the soule shall even feele with joy unspeakeable, the consolations of God flow into it.

Thus the blessed Spirit doth first speake peace unto us from God, and then gives our spirits an open eare to heare his voyce, and know our peace, that so we may come to finde our selves children of God, and heires with Christ. Thus he doth not only spread a Table for us, and there sets forth that Bread of heaven in the

Rom 8. 15. 16, 17.

the holy Ordinances of God, but gives us power to eate, making them more sweete to us than the hony-combe, and thus brings us on to more fulnesse of growth, and eternall life thorough Christ.

Hence commeth it that a Christian can rejoyce in tribulation, because this holy spirit sheds abroad inour harts that love of God which is *better than life*, and gives us so palpable a sense of it, that it beareth downe all other feelings before it: See *Romans* 5. 3, 4, 5. So the Apostles (*Acts* 5. 41.) Psal. 63. 3.

Thus as the sufferings of Christ doe abound in any of his members: so doth the God of consolation cause his 2 Cor. 1. 5.

com-

comforts to abound through Christ. And as hee thus sustaines the soule in ordinarie afflictions; so againe in extraordinary troubles, he poureth out more than ordinarie refreshings: alwayes affording grace proportionable for the triall, and the issue with the tentation. Thus when wicked persecutors have devised exquisite torments for the bodies of the faithfull, this blessed Spirit hath measured out unto them, strong and strange joyes, even transcendant ravishings.

1 Cor. 10. 13.

Famous is the Storie of that thrice famous Martyr, *Theodorus*, recorded by *Russinus*; who being apprehended by an Officer of that curled *Apostata*, *Iulian*; and from the

Russin. lib. 1. cap 36

the verie ſpring of day, tormented grievouſly till ten of the clocke, yet all that time in many changes of torments and tormentors; ſuch (ſaith hee) as no age ever ſaw the like, did nothing elſe but with a calme, and chearefull countenance, ſing that *Pſalme*; *Let them be confounded who worſhip graven Images, and truſt in their Idols.* Afterward, being demanded by *Ruffinus*, concerning his ſenſe of theſe paines, affirmed that he had little feeling of any bodily griefe, but that there ſtood by him a certaine young man, who wiped off the ſweat with a moſt ſhining cloth, and often poured on him cooling waters, that he was raviſhed with delight, and could not but bee more

more sad when hee was let downe from the racke.

Above all the rest, when the faithfull heart feeleth in it selfe that holy Spirit sealing up his happinesse, and lying there as a pledge, and earnest untill he be fully instated into it; it is altogether impossible to expresse the unspeakable joy, and glorious comfort which flowes into it. Heb. 10. 34 This made the *Hebrewes rejoyce in the spoyling of their goods*; and the Apostles to goe from the whip-stocke with more joy in their hearts, than bloud on their backes. This put that strange speech into the mouth of the Apostle, who as hee *laboured more than all, so was in stripes above measure, so oft* 2 Cor. 11. 23

in

in prison, so oft in danger, and in death; when his heart overflowed with an unutterable rejoycing, and hee thus expresseth it: *I am filled with comfort, I am exceeding joyous*; or (as the word properly signifies) *I am more than redundantly joyous in all our tribulation.* 2 Cor. 7. 4.

There was no ability in his tongue, nor possibilitie in words to set out that flowing affection running over in his heart.

Oh then what trouble should deject us when hee is our Comforter? Art thou dull of hearing, art thou very unteachable? That Spirit is thy Teacher, who maketh the rudest Fisher-men the most learned Doctors of the world,

world, who taught them all tongues, and knowledge in an instant: Art thou very forgetfull? This blessed Spirit is given thee to bring all things to thy minde. Art thou slow in duty, faint, and soone wearie? This holy Spirit is sent to quicken thee, to baptize thee with fire. Wantest thou any grace, or any measure of grace? They are all *fruits of the Spirit*, springing from this root, *Love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentlenesse, goodnesse, faith &c:* Art thou assaulted with feare and doubting? This gracious Spirit is thy seale, and the earnest of thy inheritance, *untill the redemption of the possession.*

Gal. 5. 22, 23.

Eph. 1. 14.

CHAP. XXII.

How to apply these comforts by meditation.

NOw when wee have thoroughly weighed this great privilege, and in it our many comforts, let us lay thē neerer to heart, & fasten them there by some meditation. Thus confer with thy soule:

O gracious *Comforter*, who hast taken possession of this worthlesse heart for my Lord and Saviour, and keepest it unto his use, and kingdome; how should I want consolation, who enjoy thee the onely Comforter? How should I want that joy of the Spirit, who enjoy the Spirit of Life, and oyle of gladnesse? Thou art

art my life, which canst not dye: thou my strength, and the length of my dayes. Thou hast opened mine eyes to behold that heavenly honour, and excellent glory, those wonderfull joyes, and infinite happinesse which is given me by my Father, and purchased by my gracious Redeemer: Thou hast bored mine ears to heare thosemore than heavenly strains of that Angelicall song: *On earth peace, good will toward man.* Thou hast quickned my pallate *to taste how good and sweet the Lord is.* Thou hast caused my soule to sent those precious oyntments, so that I finde that *costly Spiknard*, spent on my Saviours head, had all the sweetnesse from the head on which it was spent. Thou hast

Luk. 2. 14.

haſt raviſhed my ſoule with thoſe delectable feelings of peace, and love, which is better than life, and the moſt heavenly ſenſe of thy gracious preſence. *The ſpirit of a man will ſuſtaine his infirmities*, how much more wilt thou, moſt gracious Spirit, who art God Almighty, beare up, and ſuſtaine thy weake fainting creature, who leaneth upon thee, liveth by thee, and wholly giveth up his ſoule unto thee? When I am dull, thou quickneſt me; when forgetfull, thou prompteſt mee; when cold, thy fiery baptiſme warms me; when doubtfull, thou confirmeſt me; when ſad thou cõforteſt me. Now then thou my gracious *Comforter*, perfit the tẽple which thou art buil-

building ; forsake not the worke of thine hands ; prosper, oh prosper thy handy-worke ; enliven, strengthen, quicken, sustaine mee, that I may live in thee, walk in thee, abide in thee, rejoyce in thee, serve, praise, and blesse thee for ever.

CHAP. XXIII.

Further confirmation for the weake soule.

EXcellent are these comforts (will many a weakely Christian say, who (as yet) is held downe by strength of tentation) singular refreshings and soveraigne cordials, able not onely to cure a sicke, but revive a dead spirit: but, alas,

I have no portion in them. Oh could I feele in my ſoule this glorious heavenly relation to God, could I by any ſearch finde, by any (but one) good and ſure proofe be aſſured that I were the leaſt of Gods children, the loweſt of Chriſt his members, a living, though never ſo little ſtone of that bleſſed Temple of the holy Spirit, all the diſcomforts of this preſent world, poverty, loſſe, contempt, reproaches, and ſcoffes of men ſhould never trouble me. Oh then how cheerefully could I wade through any griefe, any tentation? But woe is mee, I feele my ſoule ſnared, chained and enthrald in ſinfull fetters. Eaſily and cleerely I perceive many ſignes rather of a naturall

rall estate, stil subject to sinne, and Satan; no power to get up from under my corruptions; but no good signe can I discerne, at least no certaine evidence of such an happinesse.

Now indeed it is most true that howsoever these consolations are most approved medicines, yet have they none or not their perfect operation, where either they are not wel and close applied, or (soone after this applying) are rubbed off with some tentation. In the last place therefore it will not be amisse, nay, very expedient by some few, but apparent notes, and infallible markes of regeneration, to cleere the eyes of an afflicted Spirit, dimmed and deluded in the mists of Satan.

True

True it is, that the Adversary, and his Antichristian Popish Teachers wrest, & streine al their wits to perswade men that this assured knowledge of thir election, and salvation by ordinary means is a dangerous (nay so provdly peremptory are they without all warrant) a damnable doctrine, encouraging men to all presuption, & fleshly liberty. Hēce the Coūcil of *Trent* fastens an *anathema* upon it; & no marvel: For that subtill Serpent knowing well how much labour of love, and even contention in all holy obedience, what readinesse to serve, and fervour in their service this certainty of Gods favour brought forth in all the Saints; contrarily, what uncheerefulnesse and heart-

lesnesse in all duty springeth from distrust and doubtfulnesse, strives with all his might, either utterly to roote out, or much weaken this assurance of faith, whereby they hold fast the profession of their hope without wavering. So his false *Apostles, deceitfull workers, transforming themselves into the Apostles of Christ,* joyne issue with him, as knowing this Doctrine would not only quench their Purgatory, but which is worse, wonderfully coole their kitchin.

Heb.10.23

2 Cor.11. 13.

In the Epilogue, therefore, and conclusion of this discourse, I will very briefly (as in such a subject I may) lay downe and handle these three propositions:

First,

First, That the faithfull by ordinary revelations may attaine the certaine and infallible perſwaſion of their ſalvation by Chriſt.

Secondly, That it is a Chriſtian duty to labour for it.

Thirdly, That this aſſurance is the gift of God, which every one of his children doe not preſently receive, nor ſo retaine, but that the ſenſe of it ſometimes may faile them.

And laſtly, I will ſet downe ſome meanes whereby wee may ſecure our ſoules in this aſſurance of our happineſſe, which is the Sunne of al comfort: Firſt, then, that a faithfull Chriſtian may by ordinary, without extraordinarie revelations (by viſions, Angels,

&c.) bee fully assured of the life of grace alreãdy in his possession, and of glory certainly reserved for him, will appeare, first, by divers cleare Testimonies of Gods word; secondly, by the examples of the Saints; thirdly, by evident reason.

CHAP. XXIIII.

Proofe of Scriptures testifying in the faithfull a possibilitie to assure their salvation by ordinarie meanes.

FOr the evidence of this truth, consider that discourse of the Apostle, 1 *Cor.* 2. 9, 10, 11, 12 *verses*: a place much wrested by Papists, and

and grosly abused; but as all the words of Wisedome, (*Pro.* 8. 9.) *plaine to him that will understand.* Thus you shal finde the Apostle affirme: 1. That no *eye hath seene, eare heard, or ever entered into the thought of man those things which God hath prepared for his chosen:* 2. *God hath revealed even these things unto us by his Spirit*; for, *because no man can know the minde of man, save the spirit of the man which is in him,* and those to whom hee unfolds himselfe in evident expressions, much lesse *can anie man know the things of God, but the Spirit of God,* and they to whom that Spirit reveales thē, therfore (because our dull understandings cannot pierce into the secrets of God) the

Lord hath given us his Spirit, to this very purpose, *that we might know the things which are given us of God.* Observe hence, that God doth not only preordaine his children unto glory, such as eye hath not seene, &c. but by a second gift of his Spirit manifesteth this his decree unto them; which blessed Spirit openeth their eyes to discerne this grace bestowed, not on others onely, but themselves.

To this testimony in the next place, adjoyne that also in the *Rom.* 8.15,16,17. which will both cleare, and much confirme the former; *You have not received the spirit of bondage to feare againe, but you have received th Spirit of adoption, whereby wee cry Abba Father.*

ther. The Spirit himſelfe beareth witneſſe with our ſpirits that we are the children of God, and if children, then heires; heires of God, and joynt heires with Chriſt. Where marke a double grace, and gift of God: 1. That dignity, and unſpeakeable honor of being children, and heires to himſelfe, and joynt heires with Chriſt, which is conferred on all the faithfull, not onely Apoſtle, and others of eminent gifts, and place in the Church, but commonly on all thoſe true Beleevers at *Rome.* 2. That Spirit of bondage (cauſing feare) is caſt out, and the Spirit of adoption (even the Spirit of God) is given them, but to what end? even to witnes unto their conſciences, that they are ſonnes,

and heires of God, and joynt heirs with Christ. Now this is such a witnesse, as neither can deceive, or be deceived; and this Testimony of the Apostle so cleare, that even the great Cardinall (the late Champion of *Rome*) hath no shift for any defence, which every childs eye will not easily pierce through.

Take a third from 2 *Cor.* 5. 1. *Wee know if this earthlie house of our Tabernacle were dissolved, wee have a building of God, not made with hands, but eternall in the heavens: For in this wee groane, earnestly desiring to bee cloothed upon with our house, which is from heaven.* And in the 9 *ver.* the Spirit gives us this reason; *For wee walke by faith,*

not

not by ſight; where as the Apoſtle ſpeaketh generally of the faithfull, ſo alſo he mentioneth no conjecture, no gheſſe or flickering earthly hope, but a plaine evident knowledge, full of heavenly confidence, even groaning in deſire of diſſolution, that ſo they may bee cloathed upon.

And how commeth this knowledge? by ſome extraordinary revelation? no; walking by faith, not by ſight and ſenſe.

Laſtly, not to be (as were very eaſie) too copious in a matter often cleared, ſee that teſtimony of another Apoſtle, 1 *Iohn.* 3. 1, 2. *Behold what manner of love the Father hath beſtowed upon us, that wee*

should becalled the sonnes of God, &c. Therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. Beloved, now are wee the sonnes of God, and it doth not yet appeare what we shall be, but wee know when hee shall appeare, wee shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.

Carefully attend the Apostle. Hee magnifies the wonderfull love of God, and calleth us out with joy and admiration to take view of it, especially in two effects: 1. The glorious dignity to which he preferreth us; namely, To be his children: 2. The manifestation of this our happy estate, not indeed to the world (which thinketh us the most abject of creatures) but to our owne consciences, so that we

now perceive our ſelves to be children, and though yet wee know not the parcels, and particulars of that excellent eſtate, untill wee come to enjoy it, yet ſo much already we know, (not gheſſe) that when Chriſt appeareth, wee *ſhall appeare with him in glorie, and be like unto him, by that beatificall viſion of God, ſeeing him face to face.*

Adde onely to this a further confirmation from the mouth of the ſame Spirit, by the hand of the ſame Penman; 1 *Iob.* 4. 16. *And wee have knowne and beleeved the love that God hath to us.* Knit it to the former, and how ſtrongly will it binde up our hearts in this point of faith? Behold (ſaith he) and admire the

the fatherly love of God to us poore abiects in the world; hee hath made us children, despised indeed by worldly men, but by himselfe so magnified, that when Christ appeares, wee shall also appeare with him in glorie, and be eternally happy in beholding his face: This love hee hath testified, this Testimonie wee have knowne, and attained this knowledge by faith. To which very end I have wrote this whole Epistle, *That you may know you have eternall life:* See 1 *Ioh.* 5.13.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXV.

Further confirmation from the examples of the Saints, and testimonies of the Ancient.

LEt us looke now to the evidence which riseth from the examples of the Saints, & to the testimony of our predecessors, the ancient Doctors in the Christian Church. How transparently doth this confidence, and assurance of faith shine forth in the practice of the faithful? Upon what grounds could *Abraham* so readily forsake his own native Covntry, & his fathers house; so cheerfully confesse himself a sojorner in the earthly *Canaan*; so earnestly look for an heavenly habi-

habitations; so obediently sacrifice his onely sonne, in whom were shut up all the promises, but from this assurance of faith? What was it in *Moses* that caused him to refuse the adoption of *Pharaoh* but the knowledge of his adoption by God? What made the reproach of Christ more glorious in his eyes than all the treasures of Ægypt, but this respect to the recompence of the reward? of which had hee not a full assurance, hee could not so easily have left (as we say) a bird in the hand for two in the bush. What was it that hardened his heart, and steeled it against the rage of the King, to cut through all impediments, but this assurance of Gods favour?

But

But had theſe Saints, in this point, no extraordinary revelations? What teſtifies the Spirit? *By faith they did all theſe things*; that faith, which made them acknowledge, not onely that God is, but that *he is a rewarder of all that diligently ſeeke him*: Read *Heb.* 11. Whence ſprung all thoſe confident ſpeeches of *Iob*, in the midſt of a very hell in earthly miſery? *He ſhall be* (ſaith that holy Patient) *hee ſhall be my ſalvation. I know I ſhall bee juſtified.* Himſelfe points out the fountaine whence he drew theſe ſtrong comforts: *Though hee ſlay me, yet will I truſt in him, Iob* 13 15. 16.18. Whence alſo hee undauntedly averres, *I know*, (not the Redeemer generally

of

of the faithfull, but) *that my Redeemer liveth, and I shall see him* (I shall enjoy that beatificall sight of God) *for my selfe.*

Iob 19.25, 27.

How boldly doth *David* professe, *Thou shalt guide me by thy Counsell, and after receive me to glorie.* And againe, *Wherefore should I feare in the daies of evill, when the wickednesse of my heeles compasse mee?* But these examples are verie frequent, and every where meete us in the paths of holy Scripture.

Psa. 73.24.

Psal. 49.5.

Unto this practice of the Saints, let us annex some authorities of the ancient Fathers in the Church, who, no doubt, spoke from their knowledge, and feeling. *Hilar. in Mat. c. 5. The Lord will have us hope for*

the

the kingdome of heaven without anie wavering of an inconſtant will; Otherwiſe there is no juſtification by faith, if faith it ſelfe be doubtfull.

So *Chryſoſtome in Rom. Hom.* 9. *We boaſt, or glorie* (ſaith the Apoſtle) *That thou maiſt know what minde he muſt have, who hath pledged his faith to God. For hee muſt not onelie have a full perſwaſion of thoſe things which he hath received, but of thoſe which are to come, as if alreadie given him; For a man glorieth of that which hee alreadie poſſeſſeth: Becauſe, therefore, our hope is as firme of future things, as of preſent, therefore* (ſaith he) *we rejoice, or glorie of theſe, as of the other.* But to omit many other, verily that of *Bernard*, who lived in the very

very darkeneſſe, and almoſt midnight of Popery, is not to be neglected. Thus he writes in *Annunc. ſer.* 1.

It is neceſſary for thee firſt to beleeve, that thou canſt have no pardon of ſinne, but by Gods indulgence, &c. Laſtly, that thou canſt not deſerve, by any workes, the kingdome of heaven, but that it alſo muſt be freely given.

But theſe are not ſufficient: they are but the beginnings and foundations of faith. If therefore thou beleeveſt that thy ſinnes cannot be forgiven, but by him againſt whom they are committed, thou doſt well. But to this, adde yet further, that thou beleeve this alſo, namely, that thy ſinnes by him are forgiven. This is the teſtimonie of the holy Spirit, who witneſſeth unto our hearts, ſaying,

Thy

Thy ſinnes are forgiven thee. Thus the Apoſtle determineth, that a man is juſtified by faith freely. So thou muſt alſo have the teſtimonie of the ſame Sprit, that thou by the gift of God ſhalt attaine eternall life. Thus farre *Bernard.*

Adde to theſe ſome reaſon for further confirmation, and ſo we will finiſh this point. It cannot bee denyed that true faith may ordinarily apprehend, by infallible certainty, any promiſe which God hath revealed. For this is by all confeſſed to bee the very end of faith, that wee might bee certainely perſwaded (without doubting) of Gods promiſes. But God hath promiſed to every true Beleever eternall life (as cannot be denied)

nyed) *Ioh.*5.24.&c. and hath many wayes confirmed his promise by oath, seales, earnest: hence it must necessarily follow, that the faithfull may bee infallibly assured of their salvation and glory.

But some here object; Indeed if men could surely know that they had true faith, then they might be surely perswaded: but how should they come to this knowledge? Certainly that we may attain this knowledge, & power of discerning our faith, is not only apparent by that sentence of the Apo-
2Cor.13.5 stle, exhorting the *Corinthians to prove and examine their faith*, but by sense also, and every mans experience: when I beleeve an able man promising mee any kindnesse, I know, and

and even feele that I beleeve him. So that weake beleever could even from ſenſe, ſay, *I beleeve, helpe my unbeliefe.* Mar. 9. 24. But ſome object further; The promiſe (ſay they) is only generall: we have no particular promiſe, *Thou Peter*, or *Iohn ſhalt be ſaved*: therefore no ſufficient warrant to apply that generall promiſe to our ſelves in particular. But this is both fond, and falſe. For as every man hath a particular command in the generall precept; (where God chargeth al men to beleeve, obey, feare, there he chargeth every one ſingly, *Thou Peter, Iohn ſhalt beleeve, &c.* So hath everie ſingular perſon a ſpeciall promiſe to himſelfe beleeving in the

the generall, where glory is promiſed unto every Beleever.

Chap. XXVI.

That it is everie Chriſtians dutie to labour for this aſſurance.

AS now it is ſufficiently cleared, that the faithfull by the ordinary revelation of the holy Ghoſt in the Word, may grow up by faith, to an infallible aſſurance of Gods gracious purpoſe to juſtifie, and glorifie them; ſo will it as plainely appeare, that it is their duty to labour for this growth, and to give their ſoules no reſt, till they finde this bleſſed eſtate ſealed up, and

and throughly ſetled upon them: which will be manifeſted unto us, firſt, by many teſtimonies; ſecondly, by ſome reaſon taken from the Word. Thus our Saviour chargeth us, *Feare not, little Flocke, for it is your Fathers good pleaſure to give you the kingdome.* Where our gracious Lord laying downe that ground (namely) the certaine purpoſe, and promiſe of God fully decreeing, nay, delighting to give us the crowne of glory, thence raiſeth up this command, and teacheth how to expect it, even without feare. Luk. 12. 23

The like is that in the *Heb.* 10. 19. 23. where the Apoſtle premiſing that boldneſſe of faith, whereby wee may *enter into the holieſt by the blood of Chriſt,*

Christ, builds up this confidence of faith by this exhortation: *Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering*, and giveth a strong reason, *For he is faithfull that hath promised: Who will also doe it.* Very obvious, and frequent are such places condemning this wavering, and distrust of Gods gracious purpose toward us, and commanding us with assurance of faith to lay hold of these promises.

Heb 10.23

1 Thes. 5.24

Adde to these that vehement, and evident exhortation of the Apostle; *Examine your selves whether you be in the faith: Prove your owne selves: Know you not your owne selves, how that Iesus Christ is in you, except you be reprobates?* Where first hee taketh it as granted,

2 Cor. 13.5

that

that Christians may by examination know themselves, whether Christ dwel in them: secondly, he earnestly exciteth them to make triall, & proofe of this their estate.

Beyond all exception, and cavill, is that charge of the Spirit: *Wherefore the rather, Brethren, give all diligence to make your calling, and election sure.* But here also some difficulty is objected. For although wee now finde our selves in a good estate, and have firme assurance of our present happinesse, yet how should wee bee certaine so to continue unto the end? without which perleverance there can bee no salvation. True, is it, that the sense and feeling of this our blessed 2 Pet. 1. 10.

estate in the sense of Gods favour, may bee withdrawne for a time: but where faith is, it faileth not; where the life of grace is planted, it dyeth not: *You have not chosen mee, but I have chosen you, and ordained that you should goe and bring forth fruit, and your fruit should remaine:* Upon which words heare Saint *Augustine* determining, (not as if his testimonie could adde any thing unto Christ, but that we may know what was the common beleefe of the Church at that time, and may bee armed against Popish errour,) *When Christ* (saith he) *hath affirmed, I have ordained that you bring forth fruit, and that your fruit remaine, who dares say, Perhaps it shall not remaine?*

Ioh. 15. 16

De correp. et grat. c 12

How

How unanſwerable is that teſtimony of *David*: *The righteous ſhall flouriſh like a Palme,* (now the Palme never loſeth his leafe, or fruit;) *Thoſe that be planted in the houſe of the Lord, ſhall flouriſh in the Courts of the houſe of our God: They ſhall ſtill bring forth more fruit in their age; they ſhall be fat and flouriſhing.* As full is that of his Son *Salomon*; *The path of the juſt is as the ſhining light, which ſhineth more and more unto the perfect day.*

Pſal. 92. 12. 13, 14. *Plin.*

Pro. 4. 18.

And this floweth not from any thing in man, either of nature or grace, but from that covenant, and faithfulnes of God, who ſeeing the firſt *Adam* could not ſtand in the covenant of workes (*Doe this and live*) hath renued with the

faithfull, in the ſecond *Adam*, a covenant of grace, in which he hath undertaken to *worke all our workes for us*: Firſt, that he will never depart from us, but delight in us to doe us good: Secondly, that he will put ſuch a feare, of himſelfe, into our hearts, that wee ſhall never depart from him. And what elſe is this (ſaith *Auguſtine*) but *ſuch, and ſo great ſhall be my feare, which I ſhal put into their hearts, that they ſhal with perſeverance keepe cloſe unto me.*

Eſa. 26. 12.

De bono perſeveran. c. 2.

And fully to confirme and ſetle thy ſoule in aſſurance of thy perſeverance, and infallible attaining that purchaſed poſſeſſion; 1. Remember that not onely God hath wrought that eternall manſion for thee, but

but alſo wrought thee for it, 2 *Cor.*5.1.5. 2. Build on that promiſe, that he that hath begotten thee to that incorruptible inheritance, not onely reſerves it in heaven for thee, but preſerves, and *keeps thee by his power unto this ſalvation.* 1 Pet. 1.3 4,5.

But further Papiſts reply; This is a doctrine that opens a wide gate to all ſinful liberty, &utterly looſneth the bond of feare, and care to pleaſe God.

For *Anſwer*; Firſt, how doth, or can this eſtate in Gods covenant looſen, or ſlacke that bond of gracious feare, when it is apparent that this everlaſting covenant bindes our hearts faſt unto God in this feare? Secondly, is there nothing to be feared in God, but his condemning Juſtice?

Oh how fearfull (to his children) are his rods and scourges? how very fearefull? Nay, his very frowne, his threatning word so ful of terrour, that it shakes the heart of the faithfull: they tremble, they melt at it. *When I heard,* (saith *Habakkuk*) *my bellie trembled, my lips quivered at the voice: Rottennesse entred into my bones, and I trembled in my selfe, that I might rest in the day of trouble.*

Esa. 66. 2.

Hab. 3. 16.

Sure I am (and none so impudent who dare deny it) that when our blessed Saviour and his faithfull members, *Paul, Peter,* &c. had this heavenly assurance fully acquieting their soules, it was so far from cooling their zeale, and slackning their fervent diligence

ligence to pleaſe God, and ply his worke, that nothing more furthered their holy ambition to be ſerviceable & acceptable unto him.

In the next place, let us confirme this truth by a reaſon, or two: 1. It will be confeſſed that a Chriſtian ought to labour for ſuch an eſtate, wherein he ſhould continually rejoyce in the Lord, bee ever praiſing, and bleſſing his name, and have ſtrong conſolation: For it is the command of God *to delight our ſelves in the Lord, to rejoyce evermore, alwaies to rejoice in the Lord*, doubled upon us, to ſtirre up our ſoules to bleſſe the Lord, even in the ſenſe of pardon and forgiveneſſe; *in everie thing to be thankefull*: he hath given

Pſal. 39. 4
1 Thc. 5. 16
Phil. 4. 4.

Pſal. 104. 1, 2, 3.
1 The. 5. 18

with his promiſe, his oath alſo, (*that wee might have ſtrong conſolation*) but without this certainty of faith, & aſſurance of our happineſſe, & the eternall favor of God, we cannot attaine ſuch an eſtate, in which we can from the heart rejoyce in him, ever praiſe him, and enjoy ſolid cõfort from him: For what ſound joy can that ſoule find in Chriſt, who thus hangs between heaven & hell, and hath no aſſurance whether the Lord will come to him as a Judge to condemne, or as a Savior to free & acquit him? How can a man bee heartily thankefull to God for Chriſt, and bleſſe him for ſuch a gift, when heis altogether in doubt whether he hath any portion in his meditation? how can he

Heb. 6, 17. 18.

he poure out his ſoule in bleſſing the Lord Jeſus for his love, and fruits of it, when he is uncertaine whether he ſhall be built upon, or daſht againſt this rocke? What ſtrong conſolation can ariſe from a wavering opinion, or flickering hope, whether the Lord hath appointed us unto glory with himſelfe, or torment with the divell? Mat. 11. 44

Secondly, that which God offereth us in his Word, confirms by oath, conveies by his ſeales, and (above all the reſt) unchangeably aſſureth by his Spirit (as a very pledge, and earneſt unto this end) that eſtate not onely is firme, and irrevocable, but) ought with all laborious endevor and vehement contention be ſought

and made fast and sure upon us: Now it is most apparent, that by all these meanes the Lord offereth the assurance of salvation to the faithfull: and offereth them to this very end, that they might bee stablished in the assurance of his gracious purpose; (as even in earthly covenants, writings, oathes, leales, pawnes are given for no other purpose but to confirme the intent of the giver, and the state of the receiver. Be this then throughly setled in us, that we ought

2 Pet. 1. 10 *to give all diligence to make our election and calling sure.*

CHAP.

CHAP. XXVII.

That this assurance is the gift of God, the feeling of it sometimes with-held, sometimes withdrawne from the faithfull.

LAstly, that this full perswasion of faith, assuring our election, and salvation is the gift of God, cannot be denied, and therefore shall not neede any copious, or exact proofe: For we all know, and acknowledge that *everie good and perfect gift is from above, and commeth downe from the Father of lights, with whom is no variablenesse, nor shadow of turning.* Among which gifts, even the Giver himselfe is the chiefe, and the very summe of

Iames 1. 17.

of all the reſt, namely, that bleſſed *Spirit given by the Father* (*Ioh.* 14. 16.) who teſtifieth to our ſpirits, that we are Sonnes of God, and Heires with the Lord Jeſus Chriſt: and whobringerh with him as wel that *gift of faith* (1 *Cor.* 12. 9.) and the fulneſſe of it, as alſo that ſpiritual life, and ſenſe whereby wee ſee, and feele the exeellent things which are given us by God, *things which eye hath not ſeene, eare hath not heard, nor ever entred into the heart of man.*

1 Cor. 2. 9.

Secondly, as it is manifeſt that it is the gift of God, ſo is it as apparent that it is not given at all times to all Beleevers. For firſt, when wee are new borne Babes, wee finde our faith

ſo,

ſo farre from any full aſſurance, that others diſcerne our life in our earneſt longings after the Word, and our fervent deſires that wee could beleeve, rather than our ſelves in feeling that wee doe beleeve.

For whereas it is impoſſible to come to any aſſurance of our ſalvation without a ſpirit of diſcerning, whereby being able to try things that differ, wee can examine and prove our faith in God, and love to his Saints (and ſo come to the knowledge of our dwelling in *Chriſt, and that wee are tranſlated from death to life*) this ſpirit of diſcerning is not ordinarily given to Infants in underſtanding. Looke as the Children of great

Princes

Princes (yet in their infancy) much rejoyce in their costly Robes, Coronets, &c. but have not yet discretion to gather thence their Noble parentage and dignity, to which they are borne: so Christian Babes, though they see themselves richly adorned with those heavenly graces of God and doe not a little rejoyce in the present estate which they feele, yet cannot in this their infancy, by a reflected act of the judgement, gather thence their sure title, and claime to all those precious promises of God, and their future glorie, which depend on the former.

Secondly, yet further, when the children of God are growne up to some maturitie and strength, yet it plea-

seth

ſeth the Lord, (as for many reaſons beſt knowne to his owne wiſedome, ſo certainly for his own glory in them, and their glory in him) to exerciſe them with many temptations, and manifold trials; ſo that being encumbred with much wraſtling againſt unbeleefe, and other corruptions, they cannot for the preſent attaine this certainty. But when the eye of faith is ſtrengthned, and theſe miſts of tentation over-blowne, the faithfull ſoule ſeeth cleerely the love of God in Chriſt, by his holy Spirit leading him to ſalvation, and evidently diſcernes his everlaſting happineſſe ſealed up to his ſoule in the new Covenant.

And yet even then wee are ſubject

subject to lose, though not the favor of God, yet the sense of his favour, and consequently, that comfortable perswasion of our eternal life. For as some men by much neglect of seasonable refreshings decay in bodily strength, and liveliness of spirit; and some other by great distemper fall into sickness and weakness; so the strongest Christian who

Psa. 23. 4, 6 could say as *David, Though I walk through the shadow of death I will feare no evill, for thou art with me: Surely, goodnesse and mercy shall follow me all the daies of my life*; yet either by neglect, or coldnes in the means, (*Word, Prayer, &c.*) or by some grievous sinne may finde that joy of his salvation utterly hidden and clouded; as did

also

also that holy Prophet (*Psal.* 51.12.) after he had committed that foule sinne upon *Vriah* and his wife.

CHAP. XXVIII.

What meanes must be used for obtaining this assurance.

SUrely, the land of *Canaan* was the *glory of al lands*, that garden of God, which he had allotted, and bequeathed to *Abraham, Isaac, Iacob*, and their seed, even to his owne deare children on earth. As a father therfore, intending some portion for his beloved childe, will build, plant, furnish, and adorne it with all commodious helps, & convenient plea- Ezek. 20.6

pleasures for his good; so
Deu.11.12 the *Lord cared for this land, his eyes were continually upon it from the beginning of the yeere to the ending.* Hence as it flourished with Corne, Balme, Oyle, &c. so was it watered with showers, and flowing Rivers of Milke, Wine, and Hony: yet was this earthly, but a darke shadow of that heavenly Canaan: which land of eternall life the Lord legacied onely to his heires, even the joyntheires with Christ. How rich therefore is it in glory, how ravishing in divine pleasures? If the outward courts of heaven dazle the strongest eye with surpassing beautie and brightnesse? Oh what is the inward retiring, and Presence of that great King? How unspeake-

ſpeakeably, how incomprehenſibly bright and glorious? No marvell then if the Children of God (having taſted ſome fruits of this heavenly Countrey) labour for full aſſurance in the conveyance of this purchaſed poſſeſſion.

Now then in the next and laſt place, let us conſider by what meanes a Chriſtian may attaine this ſecurity, and finde his ſoule firmely inſtated and ſetled in it.

Verily, as in the material, ſo is it in this ſpiritual building: hee that will build ſure, muſt digge deepe, and caſting out looſe ſands, lay a faſt, and ſtrong foundation, and then ſet up the walls, and roofe. So hee that would build up his ſoule in aſſurance of his heavenly

venly Mansion, must first fling out loose waverings of a distrustful heart, and doubtful appearances cast into his mind by Satan; and then lay his ground upon the Rocke, the sure and unmoveable promises of God in Christ.

I have often observed divers of the faithfull, strong in many graces, and in this only (to sight) weake, who have by the plaine evidence of the Spirit in the Word bin clearely convinced, that the Lord hath planted, and rooted the life of grace in their hearts, and so have beene (for the present) not a little cheered, and comforted; yet after by some temtation to have bin wholly disheartned, and cast downe againe in themselves from all their

their joyes and conſolations; concluding that all their religion was meere hypocriſie, and themſelves bare forms and images without life: This (I am perſwaded) proceeds eſpecially from want of a thorough-grounding their perſwaſions: much ſuſpenſe, and unſetlednesſe remaining in them.

Now then it will be very needefull and expedient, (as briefly as may bee) to ſet downe how farre the way of hypocriſie (in appearance) lyes in our way to life, and the period of it, where it ſtops.

Firſt then it cannot be denied, but that a man of meere ſhewes, without the life of God, may in his outward

ward carriage to the Word, and ordinance of God, keepe way with a faithfull and sincere Christian; heare, frequent, invite others, honour the Word, and the Messengers of it. Most of these are found in *Herod*, a stinking Fox, a rancke-smelling Dissembler: *Hee heard Iohn, and knowing him a just, and holy man, feared, and observed him; when hee heard him, did many things.* So those hypocrites (*Ezek.* 33. 30, 31, 32.) *come to the Word, as Gods people, sit there as the people of God, and call on others to the same dutie.* Thus farre they seeme to hold way with the Saints; where doe they part? 1. In the ground, and end of this their frequent hearing: 2. In the effects and issues follow-

Luk. 13. 22.
Mar 6. 20.

lowing their attendance.

The ground, and end of hearing the Word, in an hypocrite, is ſometimes his carnall delight, when his luſtfull eare is tickled with the ſoft eloquence, and ſweet tongue of the Speaker, and his itching heart clawed with carnall wiſedome: Sometimes he is driven by the cryes of his yelping conſcience: His beſt end is by further informing his underſtanding to ſet a faire gloſſe upon his profeſſion, and that he may not ſit as a mute, ſtand as a Cipher, when matters of Religion are in diſcourſe, and handling. But the faithfull ſoule, out of a deepe loathing of ſinfull matter in himſelfe, & an unſiaked hunger and thirſt of righteouſnes,

know-

knowing the word to be both the physicke of the soule, whereby it is throughly clensed; and the food, whereby it is nourished, presents himselfe before the Ordinance of God, that hee may finde it Gods power to his salvation, in purging out all sinfull filthinesse, and filling him with the fruits of righteousnesse. Thus are they described, *Esa.* 2. 3. *They shall say, Come ye, and let us goe up to the mountaine of the Lord, and hee will teach us his wayes, and wee will walke in his paths.* Where the faithfull plainly expresse their end of comming to God in his Word, not onely that it may be a light to teach, and point out the right way, but that it may give strength to their feet,

feet, and enable them to walk in every good path?

Secondly, they differ in the effect and fruit of hearing: For where the heart thus drawes neare to God, as that holy *Cornelius, to heare (as in the presence of the Lord) all things commanded by him*: the Word is a mighty weapon to beat down all strong holds, and every thing exalted against the knowledge of God, to bring every thought in obedience to Christ: it wil work effectually when it is thus received: see 1*The*.2.13. so that the faithful soule can truly say, I know no sin which my heart doth not loath, & desire to expel: I know no cõmand of Christ, in which I do not unfeinedly desire, & endevour to walke with God.

Acts 10.33

2 Chr. 10. 4,5.

This cannot ſtand with hypocriſie: becauſe (as in a Tombe) there muſt be both a beautifull front without, and a dead heart within. An hypocrite muſt have a ſhew, elſe hee is an heathen: and but a ſhew, elſe a true Beleever. But he is a neuter to both: Not a plaine Infidell, for hee hath a forme of godlineſſe: not faithfull indeed, for his heart ſtill cleaves to much ſinfull filthineſſe, and is not purified from the whoriſh love of ſome darling-ſinnes. Many things (as *Herod*) he may; all, not onely he doth not, but he will not doe.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXIX.

Containing other markes differencing the true, from the seeming Christian.

NOr onely in the walls without, but in some more inward roomes we shall finde the hypocrite fairely dressed and painted. If wee looke to his understanding, we shall see it often very live-like portrayed with the forme of knowledge; so that the braine may bee even printed with the Word, that he may be a *light, and Teacher of others*, *Rom.*2.19,20.

Secondly, in the affection also there may bee some joy in hearing: And thus farre in the inward man, the dissem-

bler may keepe companie with the faithfull; where doe they break? 1. The knowledge of an hypocrite is, at least in some points, meerely speculative, ann workes not upon the will, and affection to chose, and love the good which hee knowes. Much of Gods will hee knowes, and hates: as *Ahab* and *Herod*: 1 Kin. 22, 8 *I hate him a Prophet, indeed, of God,* (saith that wicked man, sold to worke wickednesse) *of whom wee may inquire*; but I hate him, for hee speakes not good to mee, but evill: Yet could this King in some things humble himselfe, *rent his clothes, put sackcloth on his flesh,* & 21. 27. *and fasted*: So also that other incestuous beast hated the reproving Word, and kild the

the reprover. Contrary, the knowledge of the faithfull ſeaſons the heart, drawes the will and affection, nay, the actions alſo after it. 2. The difference in their joy is plain and palpable. For the formall mans joy ariſeth not from the word, indeed, or any love to the truth of God, but from his owne fancies, and dreames falſly collected from the Word, witleſly, and wilfully (and therefore ſtrongly) conceived in his owne deceitfull hart. For when he hears mercy & glory proclaimed to ſinners upon condition of beleeving, he builds a preſumption of pardon & ſalvatiõ upon that ſãdy faith of divels; carnally, (as Papiſts at this day) cõcluding (& thẽce raiſeth up al his

that faith consisteth onely in the understanding, partly in an action of the apprehension, conceiving what is the object of faith, partly in an action of the judgement, consenting to it, and approving it as a truth of God: hee thinkes not of the maine and principall act of saving faith (without which the other profit nothing) that action of the will letting al goe, and taking hold of Christ for salvation, choosing him as the supreme good and happinesse, and bringing him to his heart, whereby he is washed and purified. And hence blasphemously imagining Christ to bee but as a cloake for his sinnes, he pleasantly dreames of obtaining grace without any true re-

pen-

pentance, or change of the whole man.

Hence the promiſes of God, thus by himſelfe abuſed, are welcome, and a falſe joy followes a falſe hope. But the command of God, much more the threatning word, and reproofe for breach of the command, is grievous to him, and inſupportable; hated as cords, as bonds, as death, and the very Croſſe. For eſteeming his luſts to bee himſelfe (and indeed he is little elſe) he accounts himſelfe in them wounded, fettered, and crucified: when his luſt is reſtreined, he is impriſoned: when his ſinne is pierced, his very heart is wounded: when his corruption languiſhes, he faints, and is dead in the neſt,

and with as much joy will he goe to the Gallowse, as to that Crosse of Christ, whereby the world is crucified to him, and he unto the world.

See this exemplified in that noted hypocrite, *Herod*. The preaching of *Iohn*, (*as of Christ and all his Messengers, Mar.* 1. 14, 15.) consisted of two maine points, Repent, and Beleeve. *Repent, for the kingdome of God is at hand*: and, *Behold the Lomb of God which taketh away the sinnes of the world, Ioh.* 1.29. Now it is easie to finde what, in the preaching of *Iohn*, this incestuous beast hard so gladly. Is it any marvell if such a wretch (fancying a remission of sin, without forsaking sin, & impuniry by Christ) should with much joy heare

Mat 3.2.

of

of ſuch a Savior as he blaſphemouſly ſuppoſed? But that other neceſſary part of the Goſpell, *Repentance*, riſing from faith, (*Let every one which nameth the name of Chriſt, depart from iniquitie*) this hee hated, and the Preacher of it to the death. Now then had it beene the truth of God in which he rejoiced, the doctrin of repentance, & forſaking ſin would have bin as wel entertained as the doctrine of remiſſion, and pardō of ſin; becauſe both are equally the word of the ſame God: but whē we ſee the one received with joy, & honor of the meſſenger, the other rejected with hate, & death of the ſpeaker, who diſcerns not that his joy ſprung from that fond dream of his rotten ſpirit, that

2 Tim. 2. 19

Deu.29.19 *he walked according to the stubbornesse of his own wicked heart, he should have peace.*

Most unlike is the joy of the faithfull hearer, who loves the Word with a most entire, unexpressible affection: *Oh how* Ps.119.97 *I love thy Word*, and therefore loves it, because a word of *truth*, and a *pure word*, an unreconcilable enemy to all sinful filthinesse: and when he heares Psal. 119. 29.30.140 that double promise, the one of remitting, the other of subduing sinne; when he heares of glory, and holinesse, he is (as the Apostle) in a strait, and knowes not which to preferre, esteeming the conformitie to the death, and life of Christ brought in the Word, nothing lesse, then the fellowship with him in glory.

Take

Take a further view of this in ſome inſtances. The uprightneſſe of *Davids*, and *Hezekiahs* heart with God was ſeene in this: For when that bitter reproofe touched the quicke, *David* taketh all the blame upon himſelfe; *I have ſinned*: *Hezekiah* further confeſſeth the Word, not onely *juſt*, but *good*; *Eſa*.39.8. But *Amaziah*, who did that (in the generall) which was right, but not with an upright heart like his father *David* (2 *King*. 14.3.) diſcovers that hypocriſie of heart in rejecting the Word, when it came neere, and home to his ſinne, 2 *Chro*. 25.2.16.

To conclude this point: remember this palpable difference betwixt an upright, and

and dissembling heart: The faithfull loves, & rejoyces in that part of the word of God which the hypocrite hateth; and in the selfe same respect, the one detests & grieves at it, the other loves and rejoyceth in it: why doth the rebuke of Christ sound as death to the dissembler, but as the glad tidings of life to the upright? In both, because it is the trumpet of God to sound an alarum against sin, that (as the wals of *Iericho*) it shal fall at this blast, and be destroyed. This very nature, and effect of the Word, that it is the *Sword of the Spirit*, piercing every sinfull lust to the heart, and mortifying these earthly members, is the very cause why to the sound Christian it is a precious oyle

Psa. 141. 5.

and

and perfume, to the dissembler as a reproach, *hee cannot delight in it, Ier.6.10.*

CHAP. XXX.

Differencing the zeale, and desires after Christ in the hypocrite, and faithfull.

AND yet further even in godly zeale, and earnest longings after Christ the hypocrite wil seem to hold pace with the soūdest, & best Christian: he can be very zealous in divers things: *Iehu* had a *zeale for the Lord*; yet a transparent dissembler: See 2 *King.* 10. 16. 28, 29, 31. *Hee tooke no heed to walke in the law of the Lord with all his heart.*

Paul before his conversion, and

and other *Iewes*, all persecutors, yet zealous of the Law of God, *Acts* 22.3. *Rom.* 10.2. And certainly for that holy Apostle, it is hard to say, whether before, or after conversion hee were more fervent against, or for Christ, and his truth. How zealous was the *Pharises* in the observation of their fore-fathers *Traditions*? How zealous of old those false Teachers in abstinence: *Touch not, taste not, handle not*, how seemingly *humble, neglecting the body, and giving it no honour, &c.* So the Papists at this day, with much shew of zeale, maintaine their traditions, abstinence from flesh, from marriage, lying in haire-cloth, &c.

Colos. 2. 21, 23.

But where is the difference?

1. The

1. The Diſſembler is very hot in ſome particulars, which concerne Gods glory, but hath his owne ends in them all, and therefore when thoſe ends faile, is as cold in other things, which are as, or more needful than the former. How zealous was *Iehu* againſt *Ahabs Idols?* He rooted out the *Baalims*. Not ſo much warme againſt *Ieroboams* Idols, but ſerved the *Calves* of *Bethel*; whereby hee plainly uncovered his diſſembling heart, and manifeſted his hypocriſie to every eye.

2. The hypocrites zeale is all externall, flaming out in bitter termes againſt ſome other who diſhonour God, but never moved to ſee God diſhonoured in his owne heart and

and actions. But the faithful, as they cannot but grieve, and burne when they see others grosly offending, blaspheming and provoking God, so are they most vexed with their own (though farre lesse) rebellions and failings.

3. Lastly, the dissembler spends his heat in matters of no moment; his indignation wil be much more kindled in the use or disuse of matters of indifferēcy, then in the weightiest things of the Law or Gospell. But the upright heart knowes well, that there are some things in which he must *contend earnestly*; for matters of faith, even to losse of life; and therefore will not faile to strive, & wrastle for the truth of God (the faith given to the Saints)

Iude 3.

Saints) but ſpēd al his ſtrength in ſuch contention, live and dye in defence of it. In other things *hee muſt not ſtrive*: for *Gods Church hath no ſuch cuſtome* (1 *Cor.* 11.16.)

2 Tim. 2. 23 Tit. 2. 8, 9.

In the laſt place, as in zeale, ſo in earneſt deſires an hypocrite will ſeeme to run as faſt to Chriſt, to thirſt & long for him, as the moſt faithfull: For when the hard skin of his ſeared conſcience is flayēd off, by thoſe knives of circumciſion (the ſharp law of God) and the terrours of hell gate upon his galled ſoule, in the ſenſe of theſe agonies he will value Chriſt as highly, deſire him as heartily (as wel to the ſight of others, as to his owne ſenſe) as any true member of Chriſt: What in the world would he

hee not give, nay, a whole world to purchase one drop of that precious bloud?

This goes very farre (will some say) can any Christian goe further? Yes verily: For the faithfull soule, in the day peace, continues still as highly and dearely to esteeme the Lord Jesus, even after reconciliation: when he heares the blessed Spirit speaking peace to him, then *hee esteemes all things dung and losse in comparison of the knowledge of Christ*. Here the hypocrite leaveth him. In the storme hee will runne as fast to Christ, (*the rocke and refuge from the tempest of Gods wrath*) as any: in faire weather hee makes no hast, hee goes backe, or stands still. The one esteemes Christ

Phil. 3.8.

Psal. 32.2.

as

as medicine onely, and therefore in extremity of paine, when he is ſicke at heart, whither wil he not ſend for him? and though the pocion and preſcription be grievous, yet then it is forced down, though hee ſend it up againe: but as ſoone as he is a little cheered, he loathes his Phyſicke: The other knowes him to bee as well his meate as medicine, and therefore in health (when he findes his heart aſſured of ſalvation) longues, and hungers for him and his righteouſneſſe.

The one deſires him for juſtification in the day of wrath, to wipe off his reckoning, and enter him into glory: The other alſo for ſanctification to clenſe him from ſinne,

sinne, and beautifie his soule in the glorious image of God: If the Lord would give the hypocrite free leave to take his pleasure in sinne, without feare of judgement, how would he rejoyce, as in a great and speciall privilege? hee would account himselfe as happy in his liberty to sinne, as in his exemption from the reward of sinne. But oh how wofull a captivity, how lothsome a grave, how base a drudgery, & miserable thraldome would a faithfull soule account of such a licence? as much haring the filthinesse of sinne, as the punishment; the spirituall death, as the eternall.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXXI.

Applying these things for removing temtations rising from conceit of hypocrisie.

NOw then, seeing we know how farre an hypocrite may seeme to goe in the good way, let us proceed to remove that wavering which beares downe many a weake Christian in a very painfull & discomfortable estate. I find two especiall temptations, applied by Satan, to shake the faith of a weake soule, and to hold it in suspence, that it cannot rise up to any strong consolation in the sense and feeling of Gods grace & favor. The first and chiefe is, that whatsoever they do, is done in hypocrisie.

True

True it is, they can heare the Word, they can frequent the assemblies, reverence the sincere Teachers of it, invite others to the fellowship of the same grace, rejoyce in the Word, but all this (saith the Tempter, and truly) may bee in an hypocrite, and in themselves they thinke it is all no better than dissembling. They have some zeale (they confesse) to the truth, but an hypocriticall zeale; some desire and longing after Christ, but hypocriticall; all is meere hypocrisie. Thus they say, thus they thinke.

Now let such a Christian, 1. seriously consider, that the subtle Serpent doth not onely tempt men to presumption, but also to distrust; as is apparent

parent in thoſe aſſaults, by which he ſet upon our bleſſed Saviour: As hee allures him to a preſumptuous caſting himſelfe downe from the pinacle of the Temple, becauſe the Angels waited on him to lift, and beare him up; ſo alſo he laboureth to draw him to a diſtruſt of Gods providence, and therefore *(as the ſonne of God) to command the ſtones to be made bread*: See *Matth.*4.3.6. And as the ignorant and careleſſe worldling is the moſt ordinary object upon whom hee workes groſſe, preſumptuous dreams of ſalvation; (thoſe hee perſwades, God is mercifull, Chriſt came to ſave all men, and therefore when he heares the word of the curſe, he cauſeth

seth him, from these grounds, to blesse himselfe in his heart, saying, *I shall have peace, though I walke after the stubbornesse of mine owne heart, adding drunkennesse to thirst*; thus he rocks him in a dead sleep of sinne.) As thus he workes grosse presumptions upon the careless and blinde professour, so hee never pursues any with those weapons of distrustfull, and unbeleeving feares, but those who are either quite gone, or now going, or at least setting their faces to goe out of his Ægypt, in travell toward the heavenly Canaan.

So then when hee assaults thee with this weapon, know assuredly that Satan plainely discerns that God hath wakened, and raised thy soule from that

that drowsie cradle of sinne, in which hee so long had lulled thee in deep security. Againe, remember thy corrupt heart is very deceitfull, not onely to hide up sinne in it, and to flatter thee with faire, but false hopes, and so to breede pride, and presumption; but as cunning also to conceale any grace which is in it, and so to affright thee with likely, but false feares: It will bee then a necessary point of wisedome not to give full, and rash credite to either hope, or feare, but diligently to weigh thy estate in that ballance of the Word, which is the truth, and cannot deceive thee. First then (humbling thy soule by prayer; and intreating the assistance

1 Cor. 2. 12

of that holy Spirit, who is purposely sent that thou maist know these things which are given thee of God,) take a perfect examination, and triall of thy estate: Thou heares't, and frequentest the Word, so doe dissemblers: But doth an hypocrite, or can he follow it with an heart hungring after perfect obedience? Doth he desire to finde every thought subdued to the yoake of Christ? Nay; even then in his hearing, his hart (not steals away, but) with good leave, and full permission) goes

Ezek. 33. 31, 32.

after his covetousnesse, or some other corrupt lust, and resolves to keepe himselfe reserved in some things; making, and setting up in his heart a law against the law of God; namely,

ly, that he will not ſo be tyed to it, but that in ſome things he will uſe his owne liberty.

Againe, both a ſound, and rotten heart rejoyce in the Word: But thou findeſt love to the word, not in thy mouth as the diſſembler, *Ezek.* 33. 31. when indeede his ſoule hates it, (at leaſt ſome part of it) but in thy heart. *He receives not the love of the truth,* 2 *Theſ.* 2. 10. and therefore rejoyces not in the truth of God, but in the lyes of Satan, promiſing life without reformation: but thou out of love to the Word, even becauſe it is a purifying word, rejoyceſt in it, eſpecially that power of it, whereby thy ſoule is waſhed, and clenſed from thine owne wickednesse.

The upright and dissembler both burne in zeale; but thou findest thy heart angry, and grieved, not with some, but al sins, not with others only, but most with thine owne, whereby God is dishonored.

Lastly, the hypocrite can thirst for Christ at sometimes, when he is in the furnace, as iron, his heart for the present is softned, but as soone as it is out of the fiery triall, returnes to his hardnesse, and indeed was onely troubled, never changed. But thou findest a deepe, and unquenched thirst of Christ and his righteousnesse, ever burning in thy soule, so that even in the dayes of peace thy heart is ever sighing after him, and esteemest him as the onely medi-

medicine for thy ſicke ſpirit, ſo the onely food when thon art healthy and ſtrong. In all of theſe may the faithfull ſoule eaſily perceive that hee hath outſtript the hypocrite, and left him farre behinde, and is certainely entred into the true way of grace to glory.

Chap. XXXII.

Removing that tentation which riſeth from comparſon with other Chriſtians.

ANother ordinary tentation of Satan, is, when he worketh the humbled ſoule to compare the graces of ſome other with their

owne, and the meanes either common, and equall to both, or perhaps lesse to others, who yet (as he conceives) outstrip him in grace; and so to discourage, and overthrow this worke of faith in him.

Oh (sayes a dejected spirit) I have had more time, more seed, more labour bestowed on mee, farre more than such, or such a Christian, and yet how fruitfull are they? But I, how barren, and bare in knowledge, in faith, in love, &c. how wonderfully have they outgrowne me?

But first, let such a troubled heart observe, that this depressing, despising, and condemning our selves in respect of unfruitfulnesse, whereby we seeme to come short of others,

thers, is an eminent grace of God, unto which, by promiſe, he hath tyed all his other graces. *God gives grace to the humble.* And this is a certaine fruit of true humility. 1 Pet. 5,5.

Secondly, they are often deceived in their judgements. For know this, and remember it as a ſure truth; the more thou haſt profited in grace, and art enriched in this durable ſubſtance, the more covetous will thy heart be of ſpirituall gifts. When a worldling begins to taſte the ſweetneſſe of earthly treaſure, oh how greedily doth hee thirſt after it? And though hee lay up treaſure as duſt, & gulp downe ſinfull pleaſure as water, yet a dry dropſie poſſeſſeth him. The more he drinks, the more

he thirſts: ſo is it with that ſoule which being weaned from this, and in love with that world to come, is fired with an holy, and heavenly covetouſneſſe of ſpirituall riches: The more he bags up of thoſe evelaſting treaſures, the more poore will he ſeeme to himſelfe: oh how good a ſigne is it, when the riches of
Mat. 5. 3. grace make thee poore in ſpirit: when Chriſt ſpeakes unto thee, as ſomtime to the church
Rev. 2. 9. of *Smyrna, I know thy tribulation and poverty, but thou art rich.* For as it is a certaine ſigne that he who ſuppoſes he knowes, beleeves, loves much, *knowes*
1 Cor. 8. 2. *nothing as hee ought to know*: that when we *thinke we are increaſed in goods, and want nothing*
Rev. 3. 17. , then there is nothing

which

which we want not, *We are wretched, poore, miserable, blinde, and naked.* So when the desires sayling to the heavenly Jerusalem, are filled with the breath of that holy Spirit, are carried so swiftly, that they thinke the actions stand still, and either move not, or goe backeward; certainly that heart which sends forth these desires, is strong, and fervent in the life of grace.

Thirdly, if those whom thou thus preferrest before thy selfe, were asked their opinion, thou shouldst heare them heartily, and earnestly professe, and protest with sighes their many infirmities, as farre preferring thee, as thou them. 3

But withal, and above all re- 4

member, and apply to this purpose that common axiom, That *truth, or substance is not capable of more, or lesse.* Suppose thy mis-conceit true, that thou wert farre inferiour in grace to many, who are farre younger in the life of grace than thou; this hinders not, but that thou hast the true life of Christ and his Spirit, as well, though not so full as they. Neither in this life, nor in the other, the eldest are ever the strongest. But as a childe, or weake man, troubled with much sickneſſe, hath as true and very life as hee that is strong, and never tasted one sicke houre; so the weake Christian, held downe in tentation, hath as verily the life of God, as they who have out-

wrastled

wrastled Satan, and sinne, and enjoy much liberty, and enlargement of spirit. Who doubes but that *Paul*, after conversion, though borne out of time, excelled in grace many of the Apostles themselves: yet were they not onely living, but eminent members of Christ.

Apply these things to thy soule, and so cast out this wavering in spirit, and those *feares which breed painfulnesse*: 1 Joh. 4. 18
And then endevour to ground thy assurance, and establish thy soule by some infallible and evident signes of thy election and salvation.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXXIII.

Containing some infallible signes of our Calling and Election.

MAny sure, and evident markes hath the Lord Jesus Christ set upon his Sheep, which as by the hand of his Spirit in the Scripture he hath graven, so hath he by the same hand printed them upon us, that considering our selves marked out by them, we may come, not onely to a probable hope, but full assurance of faith, that we are his chosen Flocke, and Sheepe of his pasture, *who shall never perish, never be plucked out of his, and his Fathers hand.* Of very many I will insist one-

Ioh. 10. 28, 29.

ly

ly upon some few.

First then, read advisedly that Scripture, 1 Joh. 3. 1, 2. *Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that wee should bee called the Sonnes of God.* And, *we know that when hee shall appeare, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.* Hence, in the first place, it is evident, that those whom the Father hath made children unto himselfe, hee hath most dearely, and everlastingly loved: (see also *Ier.* 31. 3.) And againe, that when wee know our filiation, (when wee are made Sonnes,) wee know also that when Christ shall appeare, wee shall see him as hee is, and bee glorified with him. This

then

then is cleare, that when wee are children of God, wee are eternally beloved by him, and shal reigne with him in eternity. But how shall wee know that we are made children? Looke into the 9 verse of that chap. *The seed of God remaineth in them who are borne of God: he begetteth us by the Word of truth. That immortall seede brings forth in us an immortall life.* Hence also is it manifest that when God hath powerfully and effectually sowne this seed in the heart of any man, then the life of God, (that eternall life) is given him: in which regard the Gospell is often called *the power of God to salvation.* But some will say, Now I plainly see my estate were sure, if I could

Iam. 1. 18.

1. Pet. 1. 23.

Rom. 1. 16.
1. Cor. 1. 18.

in-

infallibly know that the Word were effectually applied unto me by God. Oh how should I be sure of that? how should I be certaine that the Word is made to me a seed of life? Reade 1 *Pet.* 2. 2. and compare with it the three last verses of the former chapter. *We are borne not of mortall, but immortall seed, the word of God: this Word endureth for ever: and this is the Word which by the Gospell is preached unto you. Wherefore laying aside, &c. As newborne babes desire (or thirst for) the sincere milke of the Gospell, that you may grow thereby.* From all these Scriptures linked together, observe how plainly, and necessarily, beyond all contradiction, these two conclusions are gathered:

R. *First*

1. *Whosoever thirsteth for the sincere milke of the Gospell to grow up* by it in grace, and all obedience, hee is certainely *new borne, and a babe*, (at least) *in this immortall life.* 2. *Whosoever is borne of God by this seed of his Word, is everlastingly beloved of God, and shall appeare with Christ in glorie.*

When therefore we finde that whereas heretofore, being *full, we loathed this hony-combe*; but now, feeling our selves empty and hungry, even the most bitter part of Gods word is *sweet unto us*; so that wee can truly say, All the words of God, even his commands, and judgements, as wel as his promises, are *pleasant unto our taste, more than honie*

Prov. 27. 7.

Psal. 119. 103.

unto

unto our mouth; that frequently, as the Infant for the breſt, wee longue for it, not for cuſtome, feare, or knowledge onely, but to grow up in all obedience to God, then may we, without all queſtion, conclude; Seeing God hath effectually applied this Word unto my ſoule, and in his eternall love begotten mee as a childe, and heire to himſelfe, joynt heire with Chriſt, I know that nothing ſhall ſeperate mee from the love of God, which is in Chriſt; nothing ſhall plucke mee out of the hand of my gracious Saviour, and my Almighty Father.

Againe, whoſoever is partaker of the victory of Chriſt, ſo that now not ſinne, but

Chriſt

Christ reignes in him, is certainly a true member of the Lord Jesus, and one of them, for whom Christ hath dyed: See *Rom.* 8.37,38. *We are more than Conquerors through him that loved us: I am perswaded, therefore, that nothing shall seperate us, &c. God hath given us victorie through our Lord Iesus Christ.* So then, when by the Word the strong holds of Satan are battered, and beaten downe in us, & every thought subdued to the obedience of Christ; when the dominion of sinne is deposed in us, and the Scepter of Christ, and his Throne set up in our hearts, *we are in the state of grace,* (*Rom.* 6.14.) and members of his mysticall body, baptised into his death, quickened in his re-

1 Cor. 15. 57.

surre-

ſurrection, as is apparent in the whole courſe of that chapter. But how ſhould I be aſſured that Chriſt reigneth in me, and not ſinne? Why? *Know you not that to whom you yeeld your ſelves ſervants to obey, his ſervants you are to whom you obey.* Rom 6.16. Marke then, obedience in ſervice muſt bee from a yeelding willingneſſe, and love: *(With good will doing ſervice:)* Eph 6.7. If then thou obeyeſt, thou yeeldeſt up thy ſelfe, (not forced) with love, and good will to do what is commanded: See then, and conſider not ſo much what thou doeſt, but what thou wouldſt doe, and whom thou obeyeſt. *Thou doeſt the evill thou wouldſt not doe; thou doeſt not the good thou wouldeſt doe:* Then this is no

no obedience, when it is done, but not with good wil: nay, so far art thou from obeying, that it is not done by thee, but by sin in thee. Sin doth it in thee, thou doest it not in sinne. But when the inward man delighteth in the law of God, howsoever the command of the Lord is not done as it ought, yet because out of love to it, & the giver of it, thy wil puts on the outward man to obedience: hence is manifest, that the law of God is written in thy heart, (see *Psal.* 40, 8.) and that thou livest in obedience not to sin, but Christ. Hence it is clearly evinced that thou art not a servāt of sin, whose yoak thou hatest. Thou yeeldest not up thy selfe with love, and cheerfulnesse to obey it, but

Rom. 2. 20.

sigheſt

ſigheſt under the burden of it: a captive then thou maiſt be to ſin, but no ſervant. Remember this; He is not a member of Chriſt, and his faithfull ſervant, who either for feare of law, anger of ſuperiours, or ſome ſuch outward reſpect, is driven & inforced to Chriſtian duties: yet the hand, or foot (which by reaſō of ſome lore breeding in it, or ſome weakneſſe by a blow, or fal, thorne ſticking in it, & feſtering, cannot doe the office of it is notwithſtanding a member; and a ſervant not throughly recovered of a deadly malady, nor able to do perfect ſervice, is yet a faithful ſervant: So neither is he a ſervant to ſin, who overwraſtled by ſtrong tentations, deteſting this body of death, is riguorh carried

ried captive, sending up his spirit in grones unutterable, and crying out, *Oh wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me?* And hee certainly is a servant, and member of Christ, who, pressed with sinfull weakenesse, would doe what hee cannot, and doth what hee can. Take a more through view of this truth in a familiar, and confessed instance: *Spaine* is truly said to be under the dominion of the *Spanish* King; because the people acknowledging themselves Subjects, willingly live under his lawes: but *Holland* is as truly said not to be under his dominion, because having shaken off his yoake, they live not under his lawes, nor will heare of his service. And although

though ſometime in fight they are overcome, yet doe they renew their forces, and both openly profeſſe, and behave themſelves as enemies. Thus is it with the faithfull: Rom. 6. 17. *They were the ſervants of ſinne, but now from the heart they have obeyed that forme of doctrine which was delivered them.* They hate, and reject the Law of ſinne in their members. But doth not ſinne fight againſt them? Yes, and they againſt it: And this is a ſigne of enmitie, not obedience: But it often prevailes alſo. True, but it prevailes as an Enemie; therefore they renew their ſtrength by prayer, plucke up their hearts, and ſet themſelves in order to reſiſt, and ſubdue it: No ſigne of dominion

nion in all this, but rather of that deadly feod mentioned by the Apostle, *The spirit lusteth against the flesh, and the flesh against the spirit, and these two are contrarie.*

Gal. 5. 17.

Hence again we may know that we have claime to Christ, and all that hee hath done for the Elect. For, if I am not under the dominion of sinne, I am under grace, and the true subject of Christ, even a member of his body. But I plainly finde in me a rebellion against sinne; within, by loathing it as a body of death, and a stinking carrion; without, by opposing it in all my actions, and labouring to free my selfe not onely from subjection, but from the encumbrance, and molestation of it, utterly to root

root it out, as the ſpirituall *Canaanite*. Certain am I therefore, that Chriſt hath ſubdued ſinne in me, ſetled me in his kingdome, and in his bodie: Nothing can ſeparate mee from him.

As it is very eaſie to ſee the ſoule in the body (though inviſible in the ſubſtance) by the effects and workes of it; ſo will it be no difficult matter to diſcerne the bleſſed Spirit dwelling in us, by his many, and manifeſt operations: For as in the whole body of Chriſt, ſo in every member the holy Ghoſt is ever working: Looke as in the bodie the ſoule is never idle, but ever in action, even in ſwoones when we feele it not, yet then it ceaſeth not; and though at

such times wee have no sense of it, yet others conversing with us, evidently perceive it working for life; so in the new man, *It is the same Spirit which worketh all in all*: so that when we feele it not our selves, others easily see it.

1 Cor. 12. 6

Two maine actions of the Spirit, comprehending the rest, are mortification, opposing, resisting, and working out the old man, (all sinfull matter in us,) or Vivification, quickning, repairing, and strengthening the new man. No sooner the Spirit enters, but it discovers to us much ignorance; and then stirres up to *incline the eare unto wisedome, and apply the heart to understanding, the tongue to crie for knowledge, and lift up the voyce for under-*

Pr. 2. 2, 3, 4

understanding. When now the intelligible part is somewhat cleared, and light brought forth in this new Creation; strait the dulnesse, and deadnesse of the concupiscible part (the will, and affections) is laid open. Then the heart longues, and the tongue calls out for quickening grace. Take notice of this in the Saints: Thus *David* begs for more light, *Open mine eyes, that I may see the wonders of thy Law. Teach me, O Lord, the way of thy Statutes. Give mee understanding*. But now when by the grace of God, in the exercise of the Word, *hee was growne wiser than his enemies, and of more understanding than all his teachers*; then strait his eye was upon that sluggish-

Psal. 119. 18. 33, 34.

neſſe, and deadneſſe of ſpirit: and how loud, and frequent is he for quickning? *Quicken me according to thy Word*; *quicken me according to thy judgement*; *quicken me according to thy loving kindneſſe*: how often repeated in that one *Pſalme*?

Pſal. 119. 107. 149. 154. 156. 159, &c.

Certaine is it, that as wee can never in this life wholly ſhake off all ſinfull infirmities; ſo that bleſſed Spirit will never ſuffer us to reſt in any: Looke as in the earthly *Canaan* the *Iſraelites* (untill the reigne of *Salomon*) were never in full peace; ſometime vexed with *Iabin* of *Canaan*, ſometime with the *Philiſtims*, but ever victorious: Remarkable is it, that ever their vexation was a ſure ſigne of their enlargement; and oppreſſion

by the enemy, uſhered in the deſtruction of the oppreſſor: (for when *Iſraels* ſoule was grieved with the *Canaanites*, Gods *ſoule was grieved for his Iſrael*:) So in the ſtate of grace, till that true *Salomon*, the Prince of peace, ſhall fully reigne over all his, and our enemies, wee ſhall ever be in continuall ſtrife with our ſinfull corruptions; firſt with one, then with another; and nothing ſhould more fully aſſure us that God hath certainly purpoſed to cut off any ſinfull affection in us, then that diſcovering it to our eyes, and giving us ſenſe of the burden; he gives us no reſt, that wee may give him no reſt, but ſeek importunately for helpe, till we finde it ſubdued, and deſtroyed Iudg.10.16

ſtroyed in us. Neither doth the bleſſed Spirit, by his baptiſme of fire, onely mortifie, and purge out the droſſe of our ſinfull nature, but quickens us by that heat of life in vivification; ſo that the ſoule, enflamed with the thirſt of grace and glory, can make no ſtay in his race, till it touch the marke; with all diligence adding to faith, vertue; to *vertue, knowledge; to knowledge, temperance:* and when we are not deſtitute of any grace, then putting us forward to grow in the grace which we have received.

2 Pet. 1. 5, 6, 7.

2 Pet. 3, 18

Hence is it that even in the depth of tentation when our ſelves (judging by ſenſe) ſuppoſe that all is loſt; ſtanders by (as they ſay) ſee further then

then wee, and can easily discerne this Spirit mightily working in us, grieving under the load of sinne, and unutterably groaning under this oppression, judging our selves, sighing for grace.

By this then may wee evidently discerne the Spirit dwelling in us, that we are ever in spirituall motion, action, and exercise; sometime mortifying, sometime quickning, ever leading us forward to perfection: (See *Rom.* 8. 11. 13, 14.) so that we can never rest, or sit downe in a contented estate, till wee are fully compleat in happinesse, and glory.

Lastly, another signe whereby we may, without all faile, conclude, that we are translated *from death unto life*, is, *our* 4 1 Ioh. 3. 14

love to the Brethren. For certainely, *He that receiveth a Prophet in the name of a Prophet, shall receive a Prophets reward: and he that receiveth a righteous man in the name of a righteous man, shall receive the reward of a righteous man; and hee that gives a cup of water to a Disciple in the name of a Disciple, verilie hee in no wise shall lose his reward:* Nay this token of our love proves and makes good all the former; namely, that God is our *Father, the Lord Iesus our Saviour, and we Temples of the holy Ghost:* For, *whosoever beleeveth that Iesus is the Christ, is borne of God, and every one that loveth him that begot, loveth him also that is begotten of him.* And, *Behold, let us love one another: for*

Mat. 10. 41 42.

1 Ioh. 4. 1. & 4. 7.

love

love is of God, and every one that loveth, is borne of God, and knoweth God. Where the love of Gods children is ſet out by the Spirit as a ſure token both of our love to God, and our new birth by God.

Againe, our Saviour appointeth it as the Badge of his Diſciples; *By this ſhall all men* (how much more our ſelves) *know, that you are my Diſciples if you love one another.* Read alſo, 1 *Ioh.*3.23,24. *This is his command, that we ſhould beleeve, and love one another: and he that keepeth this Commandement dwels in him, and he in him. And hereby we know that he abideth in us by the Spirit he hath given us.* Ioh.13.35.

The two great commandements of the Goſpell, are Faith, and love, which when they

they are written in our hearts by the Spirit, and he stirres us up to cleave unto our head by faith, unto our fellow members by love, it is manifest that we dwell in Christ, and Christ in us by that holy Spirit.

Hence also may a faithfull soule surely gather; God himselfe hath most clearely testified, that if I love the Brethren, I am translated from death to life, that I am borne of God, and therefore love the children of God, because being my selfe his childe, I love my Father. Christ hath set his badge, and cognizance upon me in that love, and that holy Spirit is hee, which by his presence hath brought my heart into obedience of this pre-

precept. Certaine then is it, that this love to the Saints, is proper onely to the Saints, even to those whom God hath begotten by his Word, saved by his death, and sanctified by his grace. Seeing then I finde this love to the Saints rooted in my heart, that my foule cleaves to their persons, delights in their fellowship, admires their excellencies, sure am I that the same grace which I love flourishing in others, is planted in my selfe, that their Father is my Father, their Head my Head, and that Spirit which dwels in them, resteth on me, and will abide with me for ever.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXXIV.

Recollecting and applying these things by short meditation.

NOw then in the last place let the troubled soule in some inward conference, underset, and prop up his shaken faith by applying these assurances unto himselfe.

Say then in thy heart: How long (oh my soule) how long wilt thou suffer this *feare, which hath torment*, to hold thee downe in continuall affright, and vexation? how long shall it keep out that spirituall joy, which is thy only Paradise on earth?

1 Joh. 4. 18

Search, oh my Spirit, search out in these heavenly Records

cords thoſe ſure evidences, whereby thy Lord hath graciouſly conveyed unto thee this happy and bleſſed eſtate. Are they not layed up in the middeſt of thy heart? See here firſt divers ſtrong aſſurances that God hath cleanſed thee from reigning hypocriſie, that hee hath given thee a thirſt of righteouſneſſe, not onely a deſire to know him, but to walke with him in all ſincerity of obedience. That hee hath given thee an unfeined delight, and joy, not onely in the Promiſes, but in every Commandement of thy Lord, liking, and heartily loving that purifying fire of the Word, whereby thou art refined as gold, and ſeperate from this ſinfull droſſe

drosse, which is so mixed, and incorporate with thee. A zealous anger, and griefe burning within thee, detesting every sinne whereby thy Saviour is dishonoured; and above all, thine owne, in which thou (unthankefull wretch) too often forgettest that incomperable, incomprehensible love, wherewith hee hath compassed, and embraced thee. A continuall longing after the Lord Jesus, after his death, that thou maist be buried in it; after his resurrection, that thou maist be quickened by it; and not only justified in that other, but sactified in this life, and renewed after that his glorious image, and divine beauty. True indeed, my weake soule, too

too true thou art full of infirmities, very unfruitfull, very unprofitable: every one out-ſtrips thee, and thoſe who have ſet out long after thee in this heavenly race, are now much before thee: But yet comfort thy ſelfe, for even in this eſtate thy gracious Saviour leaves thee not altogether comfortleſſe, but ſtill affords thee ſome token of his eternall love: for ſeeing thy weakeneſſe, thou art humbled within me, and broken with griefe of thy barrenneſſe. Remember that he as much delights in the low ſeat of an humble ſpirit, as in the loftieſt Throne of his glorious heavens. Eſa. 57. 15.

But riſe, my dejected ſoule, oh riſe up in ſtrong conſolations,

tions, and glorious rejoycings. See here, oh see thou hast an infallible evidence that the Father of lights hath begotten thee *through the ward of Truth: and that thou art borne anew, not of mortall, but immortall seede, the Word of God*; and therefore entred not into a corruptible, but eternall life. For, seest thou not that seede of thy Father abiding in thee? feelest thou not an unslaked thirst of that sincere milke of the Gospell, not that thou mightst have it in thy mouth for discourse, but in thy heart for growth; growth in all obedience, growth in all holinesse and perfection. Behold also, behold with joy unspeakeable, Thy Saviour hath assu-

assured his victory unto thee, and hath already throwne downe the dominion of sinne in thee. It is, indeed, an enemy, a strong, a grievous, encombring, vexing, and ah too often prevailing enemy, but an enemy: thou professest no obedience, but proclaimest open warre to every sinne: how much more will he, who conquered it reigning, subdue it rebelling in thee? yea, certainely, the Lord Jesus hath set up his victorious Crosse in thee, and he that now hangs out a flagge of defiance, will shortly set up his banner of triumph, trample all thine enemies, and bruise under thy feet both sinne, and Satan.

Consider also that the blessed Spirit (the life of thy spirit)

rit) dwelleth, and continually worketh in thee. It cannot bee that uncleane ſpirit (the Prince of diſobedience) it cannot bee the ſpirit of the world, or that fleſhly ſinfull ſpirit within thee, which is ever waſhing thee from uncleanneſſe, ſeperating thee more and more from the world, and the corruption which is inthe world through luſt, which drawes and frames thy deſires and actions to all obedience unto the Lord Jeſus; which gives thee no peace in ſinne, ſuffers thee not to reſt in any imperfection, diſcovers thy corruption, cauſeth thee to groane under it, puts thee forward in thy race, enflames thy affections, and orders thy feet to turne out of the

the evill, into the good way, and to runne in it. Doſt thou not finde in thee an unfeyned love to the Brethren? Doth not thy judgement highly eſteeme them? Doth not thy will, doe not thy affections entirely love, and honour them? Doth not thy whole ſoule bleſſe them? How doſt thou cleave to them in heart? How doſt thou admire thoſe that excell upon the earth in holineſſe? How doeſt thou delight in them, and art raviſhed with their heavenly fellowſhip?

Looke now to thy evidence; ſworne by the Father, written by the Spirit, ſealed by the bloud of thy Saviour.

Is not hee borne of God, who

who loves the children of God? Is not hee a member, who loves a fellow-member? Is not hee quickened by the same Spirit, who is united in the same spirituall love to those who live& walk in the Spirit? Rejoyce then, oh my soule, rejoyce in the Lord, and in these assurances of his everlasting truth, and favour. Cast out this spirit of bondage, this servile, this tormenting feare. Bring in that joy of the Spirit, seat it in the midst of thy heart. There let it abide, there let it reigne, making thee to delight in the Lord, to turne, and tune thy grones and sighs, to hymnes and spirituall songs, ever blessing him, who never ceaseth to blesse thee;

to

to love his glory, and glory in his love, to ſerve him in joy, and rejoyce in his ſervice.

CHAP. XXXV.

Concluding all with Prayer.

OH glorious Trinity of perſons, in the unity of one God, draw mee nearer into that holy fellowſhip, that more than heavenly Fellowſhip, which you purpoſed, purchaſed, and ſealed to mee. O Father of all mercies, ſeeing thou haſt accepted mee, ſo poore, miſerable, ſinfull wretch, and adopted mee; ſeeing (by that immor- 1 Ioh. 1. 3.

immortall seed) thou hast begotten me to thy selfe; make mee, oh make mee greatly to longue after my Fathers house; weane mee from my pilgrimage; suffer me not to stay, and linger in these vanities; suffer mee not to doat upon vexation. Thy bountifull hand hath given mee all things; *Things present, and things to come, all are mine*: Some are mine to use, some to enjoy: to use this world, not abusing it; to enjoy thy selfe, and the world to come. Oh then let me not seeke to enjoy those things which I should onely use, lest I be held from those things which I should enjoy. Give mee every day more clearely to perceive that I am on earth a stranger, and so jour-

1 Cor. 3. 22

ſojourner, a Traveller toward thy heavenly Jeruſalem: teach me to caſt behinde my backe what I know I muſt ſhortly leave bhinde me; and ſet my face fully toward thee. For what inheritance have I in the world? What portion on earth? Thou art my rich inheritance, my All-ſufficient God; oh caſt mee not away from thee, thou Supreme good, and higheſt happineſſe, ſo ſhal I never want any thing that is truly good and happy.

Oh my gracious Saviour, my ſoule panteth after thee; weary of this ſinfull world, more weary of this ſinfull fleſh, chained miſerably to this body of death, and led captive after ſinne; it lookes up to thee, and ſighes after

thee

thee my glorious deliverer; when shall I appeare in thy presence? When shall this weather-beaten Tabernacle be dissolved, to be builded up againe, and fashioned according to that Temple of thy glorious body? *O Lord, truly I am thy servant, I am thy servant, and the son of thy handmaid: thou hast broken my bonds.* Now therefore take, and challenge thine owne. *Other Lords beside thee have had dominion over me; but I will remember thee onely, and thy name.* Cruell, imperious, and shamefull Lords have tyrannized over me, and wasted my soule: The false world, and worse than it, Satan; and worse then hee, Sinne; their service, slavery; their wages, death: When I

Psa. 116.16

Esa. 26.13.

was

was theirs, I was neither thine nor mine owne. But Lord reſcue the price of thine owne blood, reſtore mee to thee, and to my ſelfe: Nay, cut me off from my ſelfe, that I may be grafted, and abide wholly in thee; empty me of my ſelfe that I may be filled with thee; let me dye in my ſelfe, that I may live in thee; let mee bee nothing in my ſelfe, that I may be all in thee. Oh raviſh my heart with thy beauty, and teach me to abhorre the painted harlotry of this ſinfull world; unite my heart unto thee by faith, and knit it faſt in love: And ſeeing thou haſt ſought up this loſt ſheepe, and brought mee into thy flocke, fold me in thy protection, and feed me in theſe greene paſ-

ſtures, till I reſt with thee for ever.

Oh thou holy and bleſſed Spirit, who ſealeſt unto mee thoſe precious promiſes, apply powerfully this ſignet to my heart, and ſeale it up in thy Covenant. Open mine eyes, and faſten them on Chriſt, and thoſe things where Chriſt ſitteth at the right hand of God: Make mee to know, and remember that I can loſe no good thing, ſo long as I enjoy thee: Oh, with all thy other graces, I beſeech thee ſpeake peace to this troubled heart, and give thy ſervant to heare what thou ſpeakeſt. Say to my ſoule, The Father of Chriſt is thy father, the Lord Jeſus is thy wiſedome, thy righteouſneſſe,

ſancti-

ſanctification, and redemption. I am thy life, thy pledge, and earneſt of that purchaſed inheritance; I am thy ſtay, I am thy Comforter: *Feare not, peace be unto thee, be ſtrong, and of a good courage,* ſo ſhall thy weake Temple be ſtrengthened, ſo ſhall all earthly ſorrow, and tormenting fears vaniſh as a morning cloud, and my ſoule ſhall ever rejoyce in thee *my moſt mercifull God, my moſt gracious Redeemer, and ſweeteſt Comforter.* Amen, Amen. Dan. 10. 19

FINIS.